

JUL 5 '83



Mahalapye, Botswana



MESSENGER

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Africa Inter-Mennonite Mission, Inc.

in this issue —

- PAGE 3 : Gaborone Consultation
 PAGE 7 : Walking In The Wilderness - Jim Egli
 PAGE 8 : I Would Do It Again - Irene Weaver
 PAGE 10: Twice Out Of Retirement - Ed Weaver
 PAGE 11: A Summer Experience - Gladys Goering
 PAGE 12: Where In The World - AIMM Directory
 PAGE 14: Letters To The Churches - President Mbonza
 PAGE 15: With Deep Appreciation - Kidinda Shandungo
 PAGE 16: We, Too, Are A Faith Mission - Editorial

Photos: pp. 3-6: Jim Egli and Bud Dyck; pp. 9-11: Jim Bertsche; pp. 7, 8 and cover: Bob Gerhart

Another Messenger —

"Lesotho? Never heard of it!"

We still hear that frequently. Nor does it help to explain that the country was called Basutoland until independence in 1966. "Never heard of that either," is the usual response. That may be understandable considering that most of Lesotho's ties have been with Britain and the Commonwealth of Nations rather than the United States. After all, who can keep up with all 167 nations of the world?

But when one says, "AIMM, the Africa Inter-Mennonite Mission? Never heard of it!" that's when you begin to wonder who has been paying attention to what? Yes, it still happens right here in Elkhart and in other Mennonite communities, too. Among older folk the former name, "Congo Inland Mission," may register, though the fact of expanded ministries in southern and west Africa is not always known.

This may mean, of course, that we have done a good job of maintaining a low profile. We have not been trying to build a large man-made kingdom for ourselves. We want God to have the glory, not our human organization or efforts.

On the other hand, it means we still have a reason for additional communication and for another Messenger, and more after this one. More need to be informed, to be brought up to date on what God is doing in Africa today! We'll help you focus on just a few of the 55 countries of that continent, including Lesotho, so you can help us glorify our great God as together we are obedient to His Great Commission. AIMM is just a part of God's working, but we are a part, and you too can be a partner.

the cover —

Traditional housing in Mahalapye, Botswana.

Botswana was the scene for last summer's major consultation and review of AIMM's work with African Spiritual Churches in Southern Africa.

A more comprehensive report of the Gaborone Consultation was prepared by James Bertsche for the AIMM Board. Copies can be made available to interested persons on request in the Elkhart office.

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Victoria Falls can't be put in a bathtub. And the Khalahari Desert doesn't fit into a sandbox! How then can one compress a five day consultation into a few paragraphs?

Gaborone

Consultation

Intense and dynamic, loosely structured yet productive in interaction, these are descriptions that fit. Forty-three people from five African nations, mission and service personnel from four agencies, combined with two resource persons on the campus of the University of Botswana and Swaziland in the capital city of Gaborone, Botswana. The days of July 27 to 31, 1981 will remain significant in AIMM's involvement in southern Africa as a review and evaluation focused on the past five years of ministry with the African Spiritual Churches, the ASC's.

July is wintertime in the southern hemisphere and Botswana's chilly nights and invigorating bright days were a fitting setting for an attempt to see clearly what God's directions might be for coming years.

African Spiritual Churches were represented from Lesotho and Swaziland as well as host country Botswana. While several objectives had been established in the planning of the sessions, the prepared schedule was readily adapted to the felt needs and concerns of all who had assembled. It was the first time most of these ASC leaders had met and the devotional times became an occasion for building fellowship through worship and sharing.



Small group discussion

AIMM Board representative Peter Sawatzky reported, "There was considerable concern as to whether a diverse and mixed group such as this would be able to jell and have meaningful interaction with each other. However, before long Bishop Monyatsi, from the Eleven Apostles Spirit Healing Church in Francistown, was embracing Isaac Dlamini from Swaziland and Emily Mohono, of Lesotho, was recalling the cold Canadian winter, when she and her husband Sam visited North America in 1978. The spirit of brotherhood soon became evident and there emerged a freedom of interaction which allowed for personal, honest and in-depth dialogue."

together

Peter Hamm, representing the Mennonite Brethren Board of Missions/Services recalled, "Most useful were the joint sessions in which both the Spiritual Church leaders and the Mennonite mission representatives shared freely the common elements, as well as the differences, of the separate traditions (similarity in origins, emphasis on peoplehood, faith in Christ, Biblicism, adult baptism) suggested a certain kinship.

"To recognize the difficulties in understanding one another, pointed to new approaches and strategies (missionaries need to listen more; for Africans the Old Testament with its rituals is easier to grasp than the more philosophical New Testament). It was especially helpful to ask what the West can learn from Africa, and what Africa can learn from the West. These sessions brought about a mutuality and trust."



ASC Leadership caucus



Mr. Mohono's illustration of the Church in history.

Samuel Mohono, a key layperson in the Federal Council of African Spiritual Churches of Lesotho, gave a perspective of the ASC's from an African stance. He said, "We are sometimes called 'Independent Churches' but I don't know why? In fact, we are the most dependent churches anywhere because we must trust God for everything!"

Mr. Mohono illustrated his presentation by describing a house. "The foundation of the Christian church was laid in Asia. It represents the early beginnings of the church when Jesus said, 'On this rock I will build my church.' The walls of the church were raised in Europe and the West," Mr. Mohono explained. "It now remains for Africa to add the roof but there is a problem. The walls on which we seek to build the roof are badly cracked by divisions and dissensions. This is a pity."

"How can we repair the cracks which have developed during the building stage and how can we build a roof that will not leak, but will stand the test of time?" Mohono asked. He pointed out that the door has always remained the same, "That door is Jesus Christ."

It is well to note that Mr. Mohono comes from a part of Africa where housing is built very permanently with stone walls that need good foundations, unlike the easily rebuilt temporary housing of some tropical areas.

Separate caucuses at one point in the program enabled each group to speak openly among themselves about the problems each had encountered and the approaches found most productive. Each group reported the findings of their separate caucus to the general assembly.



Devotional singing Fremont and Sara Regier, Stan Nussbaum, Samuel and Emily Mohono, Sanaha Ntalohe

Please Listen...

As a result the Africans asked:

"Why do American missionaries not listen more intently to what we have to say? The missionaries sometimes give the feeling that they listen to themselves and speak at the Africans.

"How do suspicions come between us? Suspicion on both parts makes everything hard to interpret or understand.

"Do the missionaries have to be the ones who keep all the records, the finances and the controls?

"Why do missionaries sometimes not follow our customs in our churches? Missionary men and women sit *together* in church. Sometimes missionary women come to church with bare heads or bare arms.

"And *why* do the missionaries always want to know 'Why?'"

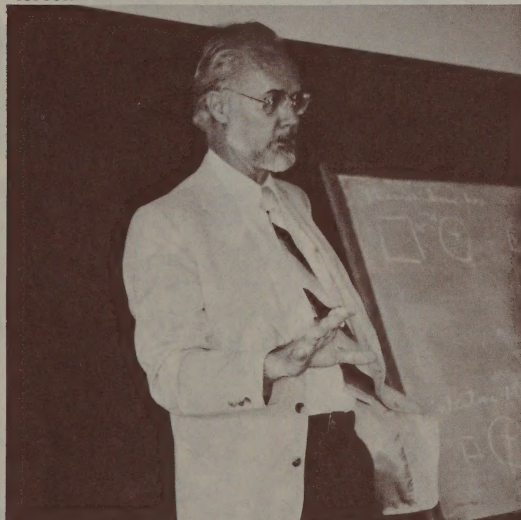
WHY? WHY?

Missionaries raised some areas of difficulty in understanding the African Spiritual Church practices. Questions about the use and view of time, the meaning of symbols and rituals, the attitude toward visions and dreams, and the handling of the Old Testament in contrast to the use of the New, were among the concerns raised. The missionary community also asked, "Why should we not ask the question, 'Why?'"

Mr. Otsile Ditseko of Francistown, Botswana spoke on behalf of the ASC leaders as he expressed deep appreciation for the positive contribution made by the Mennonite missionaries. "You have brought us together, locally and from different nations for the first time," he said. "You have accepted us in friendship."

Mr. Ditseko continued, "Our leaders have been helped to mature in their faith and to better carry out their responsibilities and work in their local churches. Sunday Schools have been established and teachers have been trained."

Additional leadership training was requested and the possibility of scholarships for competent national leaders was raised. Strong feelings about starting a correspondence style school to reach persons in outlying areas were expressed. Additional missionary personnel will be needed in the view of the ASC leaders if basic Bible training is to be provided for the many groups expressing interest.

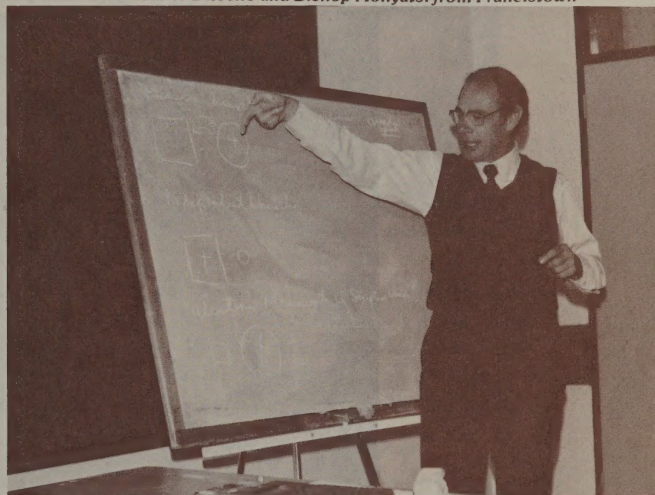


Dr. Paul Hiebert

Resource persons were Don Jacobs of Christian Leadership Foundation, Landisville, PA, and Paul Hiebert of the School of World Missions in Pasadena, CA. Their input was invaluable in focusing on the difficulties of cross-cultural ministries and understandings and in the use and meanings of ritual and symbols. Stan Nussbaum summed it up, "The presentations of these two men were of such a nature that it is impossible to praise them too highly. Unfortunately for the reader, it is also impossible for me to summarize them. I had the impression that we were getting full semester courses condensed to three sessions."



Otsile Ditseko and Bishop Monyatsi from Francistown



Don Jacobs

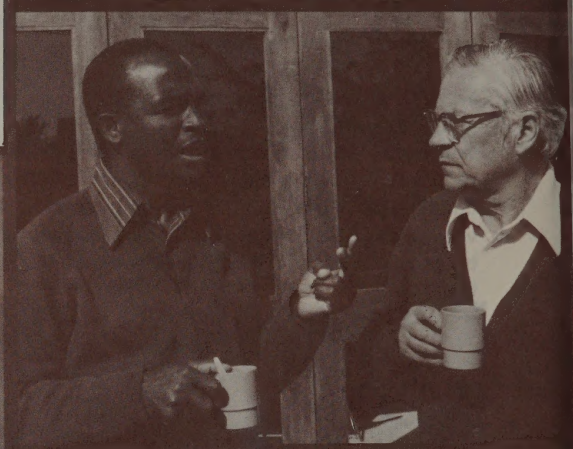
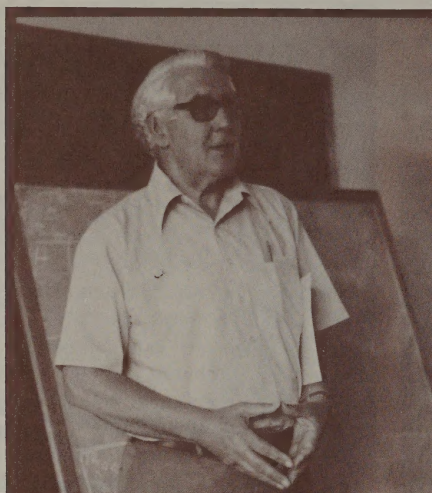
Peter Hamm in his conclusions reflects, "There was a wholesome interaction both in the formal sessions, especially during question periods, and during informal get-togethers as at meal times, coffee breaks, and in dormitory accommodations. The process of interaction will probably have more useful long-range benefits than any of the concrete plans of action that were discussed."

After observing the personal interaction taking place among the participants at the Gaborone Consultation, Stan Nussbaum stated, "I for one, can't think of a group of people, both Africans and missionaries, with whom I would rather be serving the Lord. We aren't perfect or perfectly harmonious, but there is among us a deep sense of common commitment, and a lot of good people putting their commitment into action. This is the team to be on!"

—compiled by Bob Gerhart
from reports by James Bertsche, Peter Sawatsky,
Peter Hamm, and Stan Nussbaum



GABORONE '81



Clockwise from left

*Jonathan and Mary Kay Larson with Peter Hamm
James Bertsche, Convener
Worship Time
Patrick Kotta from Transkei and Irvin Friesen
Coffee Break
Talking with Rev. J.C. Tshwene*



Basotho Children, Lesotho hillside

WALKING IN THE WILDERNESS

— Jim Egli

Have you ever felt that you were in the wilderness, that difficulties and trials were too much? Our time here has in some ways been a wilderness experience. We are just beginning to realize the immense value in this. God led both Jesus and the Israelites into the wilderness. We also sense our experience as God's leading.

For Jesus the wilderness experience was a time of important preparation for ministry. For Him, as for the Israelites, it was a time of trial and temptation. As Jesus faced crucial temptations, He made decisions and set priorities that would later guide His ministry, giving it clarity and purpose. Right now we see this as the biggest value of the wilderness—the opportunity to set priorities, priorities which we hope to keep as we re-enter ministry. We want our wilderness experience to be like Jesus', a time when fellowship with God can be greatly deepened. A priority we're working on now is family relationships.

The biggest temptation in the wilderness—the one to which the Israelites yielded—is to complain and grumble. We can see why they did it: the wilderness isn't an easy experience. Things are rough. "Egypt was better!" There is the feeling that you don't know where you're going, or that perhaps you aren't going anywhere. Yet it must be instructive to us that the Israelites' complaining and sin made the trip immeasurably longer. It was a sign of their unbelief, their failure to believe in God's promise. Time and time again they looked at things from merely a human perspective and completely missed what God intended for them.

The alternative to grumbling and complaining is to trust in God's faithfulness and love. He is taking us somewhere through this—to a land flowing with milk and honey as in the case of the Israelites, and to a great and fruitful ministry as was true for Jesus. And when we get there, we must realize that those giants who will seem so large compared to us are so very small compared to Him.

Are you tired and thirsty? Are you facing giants or temptations? It's crucial to see things from God's perspective. He has great purposes for our lives. The wilderness is a time of temptation and trial. It is also a unique opportunity to set new priorities and to deepen our walk with God and our trust in Him.

THE WAY IT WAS

Edwin and Irene Weaver invested their lives in ministry in both India and Africa. Ed was born in Newton, Kansas. Irene, born of missionary parents in India, met Ed at Goshen College. They were married in 1933. From 1935 to 1956 Ed and Irene worked in India in evangelism and church administration. Beginning in 1957 the Weavers have given themselves to service with indigenous churches in several parts of Africa. These are groups sometimes called African Independent Churches, AIC's, or African Spiritual Churches. The Weavers served with AIMM as very active retirees. They are members of Whitestone Menonite Church of the South Central Conference in Hesston, Kansas. Ed and Irene have three children: Carolyn, Betty, and Jerry.



Ed and Irene Weaver

I would do it again!

—Irene Weaver

The kerosene street lights dimly lighted my way as I walked down the street of Dhamtari to the home of my Muslim friends. I was eighteen then, and in a few days would be leaving my home and family in India for the States. How I dreaded it!

Mafuzan and I sat near her little mud stove while she deftly baked her chapattis over the embers of her cooking fire. We talked of many things, and then she stopped, and turning to me said, "Are you never coming back?"

I couldn't answer then. That I wanted to return was very real, but whether I should, or would was very uncertain. For seven long years the question burned in my mind; but now fifty years later I know that was the beginning, if only in thought, of preparing and planning for the forty-six years of mission service which followed. Forty-six years of learning and growing in relating to peoples of other lands and cultures.

Strangely, the answer which seemed so clearly point to India didn't start there. Following a year of study at the Biblical Seminary in New York, Ed and I were married and served for two years in the Chicago Home Mission on South Union Avenue in Chicago. Perhaps it was as early as the Chicago experience that we learned how much more effective it was to work *with* people instead of *for* them.

It was a great day in November, 1935 when Ed and I and our baby daughter, eleven months old, arrived back in Dhamtari, India. My friend's question had been answered, "Yes, I had returned."

But things were different now. I was not a carefree MK going to boarding school in the Himalayas for nine months of each year. Now I was one with my colleagues helping to shoulder the load. As a mother I learned that sending my children away to boarding school was much more of a heartache than anything I had experienced when I myself had to leave home for school.

Our jungle homes are still a bright spot in my memory. The cold nights of November to January when the children were home from school was the best time of the year. With no other source of entertainment, our family spent many an evening around the fireplace enjoying being together.

We spent many weeks in the villages of Madhaya Pradesh, living in tents, and ministering to the villagers in one way and another. A group of women (we called them Bible women) served with me in visiting the village women in their homes. One day as we left the courtyard of one of the homes, one of the women followed behind us, and I heard her ask one of the women of our team, "How much are you paid to do this?" Perhaps that one incident in the early years, more than any other started a whole chain of questions. What were we doing? What was the result of hiring people to go out and witness? What was this doing to the National Church? Should workers be paid with foreign funds?

Ed and I spent many hours, talking, thinking and praying about the questions in our minds. We strongly felt that the church in India must be free to be indigenous; it must be free to develop as the India Mennonite Church in the culture of India; that the church must assume the responsibility of church growth and outreach. The twenty-one years in India were growing years, rewarding and joyful. They were years of learning and change. India in our experience was the stepping stone to the years ahead.

Following India, the eighteen years in different countries of Africa, were hard pioneering years, pioneering a new work among the many indigenous churches of West and Southern Africa. Times had brought many changes. The new emerging countries were demanding freedom. The churches too wanted to be free. This required a new strategy of working.

Three overarching factors seemed essential in our ministry among indigenous churches:

1. The grass roots factor seemed so right to us. Meeting people where they are religiously, educationally, economically—even geographically—then going to them—joining them in fasting, praying and healing. Jesus did.

2. The teacher-learner factor, too was important. In all humility, one cannot teach unless he is ready to learn.

3. The "person to person" factor must ever receive priority.

We have enlarged on these three factors in our book titled *From Kuku Hill*. The book gives an account of our real life struggles and triumphs as we worked in Ghana, West Africa.

I shall always treasure the thrill of experiencing the joy of a student, in some small Bible class, far away from anywhere, as the truth of God's Word became real to him. This was reward enough for the years spent in Bible study with indigenous church groups.



Weaver's Botswana home, Gaborone



Irene preparing lunch in Botswana bush

Through the years I have learned how very important my own attitudes are—attitudes of sensitivity, humility and patience. Perhaps I can summarize it in one phrase, "Love for all people."

I know all over again that the Holy Spirit is still the most important strategy in mission today. I am more aware than ever before of what outward simplicity and inner integrity mean to me. It is the standard I constantly try to attain. I keep reaching for it. I strive that this norm be a way of life for me.

The last years between 1933 and 1980 have been a tremendous experience of love and growing—I want to keep on loving and growing.

What of separations—evacuations—troop ship travel—sicknesses—healings—heartaches. There have been many and they are a very real part of me and what God has done in my life. These experiences too must be written sometime.

If I were going again and if God would call me to give another forty-six years, I would do it gladly—over and over again!



AIMM homes in Gaborone named: "Houses of Peace"

In the fall of 1974 Jim Bertsche and Howard Habegger very unexpectedly came to our Villa home in Hesston, Kansas, where we had retired. It didn't take them long to come out with what they had on their minds. AIMM wanted to expand its mission into other African countries. Irene and I had previously spent about a dozen years among the AIC's along the west coast of Africa, under the Elkhart MBM board. Would we go to Botswana, Jim wanted to know, to work among the AIC's there, in patterns similar to those we used in West Africa, this time under the auspices of AIMM? We would go.



Lunch by the wayside

TWICE OUT OF RETIREMENT

—Edwin I. Weaver

We had worked in India for twenty-one years before coming to Africa. To work with AIC's in Africa is something else! But we like Africa and we liked working among AIC's when we were in West Africa. These people are so open, so eager to learn more about the Bible. This attitude we found among them, wherever we went in Africa. With a great deal of anticipation we accepted Jim's challenge.

Some years earlier we had done some looking around in Swaziland, Lesotho, even Botswana. During this trip Jim Juhnke, one time MCC Director for Botswana, introduced us to the Spiritual Healing Church in Gaborone. This was where we came after accepting an appointment to Botswana under AIMM. We lived two happy years in our little Gaborone house, from 1975 to 1977. Late in 1977, at the end of our term in Botswana, AIMM requested us to go to Lesotho for a month to evaluate the viability of sending more personnel to that land-locked, roof top country in the heart of South Africa; a country with long ranges of sometimes snow-capped mountains. Our affirmative recommendation was accepted and now AIMM has a growing ministry in that country also.

After these experiences in Botswana and Lesotho we returned to our little apartment at Schowalter Villa. For the past ten years we had tried to retire, but always something seemed to happen. This time it was Jim Bertsche again. In 1979 he said to us, "Would you go to Orodara, Upper Volta, to spend time with the Loren Entz's and the Dennis Rempels? They have just begun a new mission for AIMM in Orodara." Still another country. Missions require courage and faith!

After two weeks in hot Orodara, we wondered what we were doing there anyway. But by the end of the month we were happy we went. Instead of counseling we were being counseled by some highly dedicated, trained young people, who are trying to witness effectively to Animists and Muslims—where other missions have failed. At the same time they are having to learn several languages. What courage! It is infectious. What if we had refused going to Orodara!

Shortly after Jim's first letter another followed, almost apologetically asking, "Would you go on from Orodara to Southern Africa?" He explained our assignment: counsel AIMM personnel; find more open doors to work among AIC's; discover how Mennonites in Southern Africa could give a united witness. It had always been difficult to refuse Jim anything! So of course we went.



With Spiritual Healing Church leaders in Gabane, Botswana

REFLECTIONS ON A SUMMER'S EXPERIENCE

Mrs. Goering was part of a delegation that visited Zaire enroute to Mennonite World Conference Council meetings in Nairobi last summer

Let me tell you a story out of our experiences in Upper Volta:

His name is Musa. A name for Moses in the Dioula trade language of French West Africa. He grew up in nearby Mali and became an evangelist in the Christian & Missionary Alliance mission. The Alliance was expanding into Upper Volta. They sent Musa to Orodara. They even built a church building there. Few members developed.

The Mali mission left. Musa stayed on. He has a profitable fruit farm in this fruit capital of Upper Volta. He tills his ten acres of good sandy soil with only an African hoe. He works very hard. But Musa is not interested only in farming.

Every Sunday possible he will be found present in the worship service at the little church, participating along with the Mennonite missionaries and a number of adults and children attracted to the worship of Christians. Musa will continue to make a significant contribution to the growth of the church.

After the last Sunday service when we were in Orodara, Musa came with us to the Entz home for dinner. Sitting under a large mango tree we had a good opportunity to visit. He speaks fairly good English. I asked him how he feels about the Mennonites and his future role in the developing church. His only concern was that the church should be Protestant. Being Mennonite or C&MA made little difference to him. He could work equally well in either. His actions are proving his words. He is a committed Christian. He is still an evangelist.



Ed interviewing pastor's daughter

We are now back in the Villa again; thinking about and evaluating our last three months in Africa. We did not want our last experiences to be an anti-climax to more than forty years in mission. It wasn't. We are so happy that we responded once again to what we believe was God's call to us. One's commitment to Jesus is for life!

What an interesting introduction, the privilege of being introduced to Mennonites in Zaire and Kenya this past summer.

We learned that African and North American Mennonites share some mutual traits. When someone comes to call, we all insist they stay for refreshments. Zaire's custom couldn't be called a coffee break, but it serves the same function. Usually we were given orange soda pop and warm roasted peanuts. Often we were offered a full meal. Handicapped as we were in being unable to speak the language of the hosts, we could surely understand their serving with smiles.

As we drove through the main street in Tshikapa on our way to church on Sunday morning, the street was crowded with people setting up their shops for the biggest market day of the week. In Zaire, as in North America, the Sabbath is a good day for business for more people than it is a day for church going. Even so it was in the churches that we felt most strongly our bonds of friendship.

The Mennonite love of singing is another common denominator. How lustily they sang. In one church a woman noticed we weren't singing along with the hymn, so she walked across the aisle to lend me her Tshiluba song book. Maybe I earned an "A" for effort, but thankfully there was no one sitting in front of me to hear my novel pronunciation.

One of the most forceful differences is in the amount of teaching supplies we have and they lack. All the colorful and appealing Sunday School materials our children use as a matter of course seem the more wonderful when contrasted with the scarcity of equipment for the African child and adult. How does a parent or teacher make the Word come alive without the pictures and books we take for granted? And how does one live an entire lifetime without knowing how to read at all? it is humbling to think about.

Broadening our understanding of how to support our missionaries was a trip bonus. There's money, of course, but more than that. Our representatives in Africa need wisdom and patience beyond their own, and they need to be told we care about them and their work, our work. We will long appreciate the brief experience in Africa that was ours this year. It was a special people-vacation.

—Gladys Goering

WHERE IN THE WORLD...

An AIMM Directory

ON THE FIELD

UPPER VOLTA

B.P. 40
Orodara, Upper Volta
Loren and Donna Entz

ZAIRE

Mailing address:
B.P. 4081
Kinshasa II
Republic of Zaire
Kalonda Station
Mary Epp
John and Mary Pauls
Dennis and Shirley Ries
Leona Schrag
Dennis and Dianne Schmidt
Richard and Jean Hirschler

Kamayala Station
Ben and Helen Eidse

Kinshasa
Peter and Gladys Buller
Charles Buller
Charles Fennig
John and Leona Krause
Earl and Ruth Roth

Nyanga
Donna Colbert
Arnold and Grace Harder

Tshikapa
Herman and Ruth Buller

BOTSWANA

P.O. Box 703
Gaborone, Botswana
Jonathan and Mary Kay Larson
Fremont and Sara Regier
Henry and Naomi Unrau
P.O. Box 469
Selibe-Pikwe, Botswana
Irvin and Lydia Friesen

Private Bag 24
Francistown, Botswana
Ronald Sawatzky

P.O. Box 669
Francistown, Botswana
Harry and Lois Dyck

LESOTHO

P.O. Box MS 365
Maseru 100, Lesotho
Stan and Lorri Nussbaum

P.O. Box 1331
Maseru 100, Lesotho

John and Tina Bohn
Jim and Vicki Egli

N.U.L.
P.O. Roma, Lesotho
Titus and Karen Guenther



LANGUAGE STUDY

Bureau Missions Protestantes
1143 Chaussee de Waterloo
1180 Bruxelles, Belgium
Jim and Cheryl Campbell
Donald and Norma Friesen

L'Accueil Fraternel
43400
Le Chambon-Sur-Lignon
Haute Loire, France
Gail Wiebe

UNDER APPOINTMENT

Anne Garber to Upper Volta

Virgil and Mary Kay Gerig
to Lesotho

ON FURLOUGH

Jim and Jeanette Christensen
6280 Chase
Arvada, CO 80003

Richard and Marilyn Derksen
c/o AIMM
224 West High Street
Elkhart, IN 46516

Levi and Eudene Keidel
c/o Priscilla Miller
4205 Tacoma
Fort Wayne, IN 46807

John and Ruth Kliwer
1056 S. Church St.
Reedley, CA 93654

Anna V. Liechty
c/o Paul Liechty
265 Buckeye Street
Berne, IN 46711

Rudy and Elvina Martens
2114 Lane Avenue
Elkhart, IN 46517

Dennis and Jeanne Rempel
c/o Herman Rempel
P.O. Box 505
Alta Loma, CA 91701

Lodema Short
406 Brussel
Archbold, OH 43502

Don and Naomi Unruh
c/o Harvey Unruh
Route 1, Box 56
Pawnee Rock, KS 67567

RETIRED MISSIONARIES

Elmer and Esther Dick
Route 2, Box 255A
Mountain Lake, MN 56159

Aganetha Friesen Enns
Sp. 102 Hawthorne Acres
310 NE Kings Valley Highway
Dallas, OR 97338

Archie and Irma Graber
Route 2
Stryker, OH 43557

Frieda Guengerich
6650 West Butler Drive, Apt. 6
Glendale, AZ 85302

Justina Neufeld
609 South Walnut, Box 183
Inman, KS 67546

Anna Quiring
209 Ninth Street, Box 105
Mountain Lake, MN 56159

Glen and Ina Rocke
Route 1, Box 168
Pekin, IL 61554

Tina Quiring
209 Ninth Street, Box 105
Mountain Lake, MN 56159

Mabel Sauder
Route 2
Grabill, IN 46741

Fanny Schmallenberger
136 North Maple
Morton, IL 61550

Russell and Helen Schnell
6651 West Alice Avenue, Apt. 15
Glendale, AZ 85302

Merle and Dorothy Schwartz
811 Osage Street
Normal, IL 61761

Lois Slagle
Box 424
Pioneer, OH 43554

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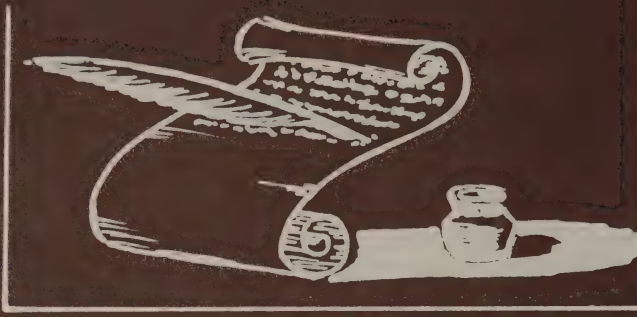
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In Partnership With The Church In Africa



Letters To The Churches . . .

TO MY BROTHERS AND SISTERS, MEMBERS OF THE AIMM:

Until we meet again may God bless you! At the moment of terminating our itinerary among you and preparing ourselves to return to Zaire, we truly want to thank you for all that you have just done for the Church of Zaire, Brattleboro, VT, as regards my English, was not wasted time. You welcomed us, my wife and me, like Africans welcome their visitors, that is to say warmly and even with applause. Dimuka, my wife, said to me on one occasion: "President, it is unbelievable; these people have the same manner here that we do at home; they are greeting us warmly and with smiles!" It has been an unforgettable experience.

You were all waiting for us everywhere, available to us everywhere, men and women, individuals and congregations, families and churches, administrators, farmers and businessmen, in your homes and in your chapels. Even our brothers and sisters of the Mennonite Brethren Church received us. We visited their office at Hillsboro, Kansas as well as some of their families and churches before taking part in a love feast prepared in our honor by a local congregation of the town.

In fact, what can we say about the picnics such as the ones at Elkhart and Newton, or about the special dinners like those at Newton, Peoria and Bloomington, or the love feasts prepared for us by the ladies at Newton and at Steinbach, or the boat excursion on the Illinois River! How can we explain the "musa" (food prepared in our African manner) which we were served on nine different occasions as though together with you we wanted to both commemorate and soften our homesickness for the hospitality of the Zaire church.

By the sincerity of our conversations you not only convinced us of your love for us but you proved your concern and your availability to strengthen the historic bonds of fraternity which characterize relations between our churches. On many different occasions when in your prayers you mentioned the Church of Zaire, your understanding was particularly deep. We felt ourselves supported and strengthened in body, mind and spirit.

Our stay among you reminded us that every Christian church that is alive is a missionary church. We have observed that you work very hard, that you love your church, that you support your church with your prayers and your possessions, that you put yourselves under obligation, men and women, for the mission of your church and that you support the work of missions with your prayers and with the resources that your hands produce. We have also observed that although each person, man and woman, works very hard, you live together and you support each other. You take care of your aged people, your widows and your orphans; you are concerned with the spiritual and moral training of your young people. The church thus becomes a true family. As salt of the earth and light of the world it goes without saying that the church should engage in practical actions of this kind. In so doing the church discretely assumes its calling to protect society from individualism, materialism and suicide.

Because of my concern for harmony, unity and honesty, we have reminded ourselves of the following three practical spiritual values in our preaching and conversationa:

1) The Church of Christ is holy, universal, one and indivisible. All members of this church are brothers and sisters in time and space.

2) Christian love which is the sign of the love of Christ is unselfish, without limit, calm and deep.

3) Supported by its Lord the Christ, the Church survives thanks to the life of its members, their faithfulness to the Master, their comprehension of their responsibilities as Christians and as church members and their knowledge of their own history.

We hope that fraternal visits for mutual encouragement organized within a framework of exchange between our respective churches may become customary and ever more frequent. We also hope that such visits may be profitable for the productive and dynamic sectors of the church. In any case, we leave you assured that you will pray without ceasing for us, prayers which are the result of your pains and sleeplessness in our behalf.

And, finally, our brothers and sisters, we will faithfully inform your brothers and sisters in Zaire concerning everything we have seen and experienced among you. We will convey to them your warm salutations. We will ask them to also pray for you for as human beings you also face difficult problems. You too are weak, prone to evil, prey to discouragement and inclined toward the temptations which characterize the world community in the midst of which we all live as we await the return of the risen Christ.

Read Philippians 1:3-10

Rev. Mbonza Kikunga

President of the Zaire
Mennonite Church

TO AFRICA INTER-MENNONITE MISSION AND
TO ALL WHO HAVE CONTRIBUTED IN ONE WAY
OR ANOTHER TO MY PRESENT SUCCESS

It is with a heart full of joy that I write to you these words, to thank you for all that you have done in order to permit me to study at Peabody University from 1972 to 1975 and to come back here again this year in order to complete my doctoral thesis and to defend it.

When I left the United States with my family in 1975, I was certain I would finish my thesis in one year and come back again to defend it. But alas, in making my calculations I was trying to mesh Zairian time with an American clock and calendar! Instead of finishing in one year, here I am terminating the long march this 24th day of June, 1981, i.e. six years later.

WITH DEEP APPRECIATION

Many of my fellow countrymen or Mennonite brothers in Zaire have never had the chance to accomplish that which I have just realized. However being among the first to blaze a new trail is not only an honor, it is also a very heavy responsibility! The present situation of Zaire and of many other underdeveloped countries is in the process of proving that it does not suffice to simply possess technical competence on how to develop available resources and to put them to work for the population. The resources and the know-how must of necessity be linked with the will to work in order to assure development. The acquisition and the mastery of knowledge are useful only in the measure that they help to resolve today's problems and to prepare for the future. It is here where my greatest challenge lies after just having completed my academic studies.

During the two study periods which I have just completed in America, I have learned much academically. However my visit of three weeks at Moundridge, Kansas and in many other Mennonite communities, have permitted me to realize the importance of the role played by the lay people in the church. The hospitality and the kindness which my family and I have experienced on the part of the Mennonite community in the United States has deeply touched us. In leaving you this message, it is impossible for me to enumerate all that you have done for my family, for me and for the Mennonite community of Zaire. It is certain that without your benevolent cooperation, I would never have arrived where I am today!

In terminating this message, my only wish is that it will be permitted me to put into practice the knowledge which has been acquired at a price of enormous sacrifice. May it be permitted us, you and me, to say one day with pride that this costly investment was not in vain! Being children of God and entrusting ourselves into His hands, we have every reason to remain optimistic.

Your brother in Jesus Christ,
Kidinda Shandungo



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EDITORIAL

We, Too, Are A Faith Mission

Words are fascinating. They can be shaped and filled, twisted and emptied. They can become pets or possessions.

"Faith" is a very special word, important to every Christian. But to what a variety of uses it is linked! When paired with "Mission" as in "Faith Mission" it becomes for some an admirable fund raising term. It is used by many to distinguish a "very spiritual" missionary agency from those who are "only denominational" missions. This is most unfortunate!

"Faith Missions" should not be used as the opposite of denominational missions. All Biblically based efforts of fulfilling the Great Commission must function by faith, not faith in budgets or churches or pledges of support, but faith in the Commissioning, Sending Saviour! If we are going to use terms to describe types of mission organization would it not be more accurate to speak of "Independent Missions" and "Church-related Missions"?

AIMM seeks to be a Church-related Mission. For this we offer no apologies. We believe it is both Biblical and sound strategy; Biblical according to the pattern of Acts 13 where the Church became the sending agency under the guidance of the Holy Spirit, and good strategy because it provides the newly planted churches of the "mission field" to relate directly to sister churches that send out the mission workers. All this is done in faith, faith in God, that He will lead and provide, guide and protect, both for the church planter and for the planted.

Commitments are made to workers by the sending church without any guaranteed storehouse of funds already in hand. Budgets are drawn up prayerfully as a matter of wise stewardship, but always in faith that Christ will work through His Body to make it all possible. Relating to a fellowship of churches who commit themselves to prayerful involvement is no less an act of faith than going out because one has personally raised enough support to underwrite his expenses. expenses.

Independent Missions have their place in God's total strategy. Para-church organizations can provide support ministries and a variety of services that transcend the limitations of denominations. Inter-denominational ventures can sometimes mobilize skills and resources that require a broad base. But these can never replace the Church as the sending, supporting, and sustaining means God intends to use to be the family the new born can relate to when the Gospel produces fruit.

A Faith Mission? We certainly are! Our trust is not in super public relations techniques, or purchased mailing lists. We don't stake our future on persuasive emotional appeals or inflated promises. We walk by faith, faith in the One Who called us and Who sends us as part of His Church.

—RWG

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MESSENGER

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in this issue —

PAGE 3: GETTING STARTED—Fremont Regier
 PAGE 6: PATIENCE—Chuck Fennig
 PAGE 7: THE WAY IT WAS—Russell and Helen Schnell
 PAGE 11: THE SAFETY OF A MISSIONARY—Stan Nussbaum
 PAGE 14: GOING
 PAGE 16: EDITORIAL: The Joy of Missions

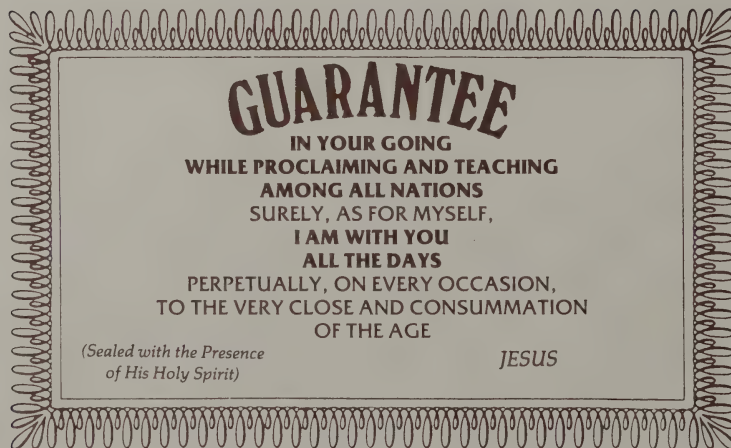
the cover —

Mother and Child, Ntlo-Kholo, Lesotho Photo by Bob Gerhart

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But we think it is enough. Are you willing to risk it? If you are interested in ministry opportunities with AIMM contact: James Bertsche, Executive Secretary at the AIMM North American office in Elkhart, IN.

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Getting Started — Fringe Benefits of Language Learning

by Fremont Regier



"Life finds us with one foot on a banana peel and the other one also on a banana peel."

Martin E. Marty

So goes language study: you think you have ahold of some concept, some phrase or some vocabulary contribution, and then you find it has slipped away from you and must be learned over again.

Aloes, Botswana



Botswana Orientation Centre is operated by a board of a number of agencies one of which is MCC. Courses consist of two weeks at the center of intensive conversational language training and culture orientation into religion, economics, agriculture, health, development, etc. Conversational Setswana training is done with a Motswana person standing in front of a group of six students drilling us over and over in repetition on key phrases with rote memory. Such group drilling is often heard in primary schools across many parts of Africa. We were not sure this was the best way for adults with western orientation with analytical mind sets and graduate degrees in adult education.

For those of us who had learned African languages prior to this experience it was easier and made more sense even when grammar was not explained, than it did to those studying an African language for the first time. We often could ferret out the grammar and explain it to others or ask the teachers, who knew little grammar, if what we deciphered was indeed the case.

BOC has the two-week session in Gaborone, then a one-week live-in in a village. Sara and I chose to live-in with separate families to be forced to use Setswana more. This turned out to be an excellent choice. Let me describe my host family, a fairly typical sort of family socially, but above average economically.

The father, David Lekgowe, had worked nine years in the mines in South Africa and about that long in the newer diamond mine at Orapa here in Botswana. He had worked up to supervisor and made good wages. For several years he has done no work in the mines. His occupation consisted of minding his cattle on the distant cattle post to which he goes from time to time and helping with field work at the lands (also distant from the village home) in season. The rest of the time he sits at home and goes from house to house of friends or relatives to talk and drink sorghum beer.

Upon arrival he took me for a tour of the village to show off his new guest to all the best friends and relatives where I got instant and intensive conversation practice in greetings, small talk and explaining why I did not want any of the beer. David was my age, almost to the month and we struck it off well right from the beginning. David was a great village teacher for me and he took his teaching me seriously. He grilled me on phrases, made me talk to his friends, told them to talk to me, and to ask me questions. He took my little pocket vocabulary book or my larger notebook from me to write into it what we had just found to be a new word for me—which happened constantly, of course. It was nearly impossible to study notes or vocabulary in his presence because he was always talking to me or writing in my books or wanting to read my notes. The same went for Sister Lekgowe. Mrs. Lekgowe, introduced to me as “Sister,” was the mother of seven children.

I had a number of late night talks with the women of the home when David was out. I probed their feelings on the absence of father and husband from the home working in the mines. I was surprised at their answer, “When our men are at home, there is no money.” I realized that David got to come home from the mines often and his wife could go there to visit him frequently. So their absence was not so bad, but this is not typical of the average worker. They are often gone six months or more at a time. In any village situation, in homes, in church meetings, at weddings, and in schools, the males are always outnumbered by the women by about two to one. Boys are away at the cattle posts so are fewer in schools. Men are gone to work in the mines or at the cattle posts.

Sister Lekgowe was kind, considerate, warm and also quite concerned about helping me with Setswana. She prepared nice meals from the grocery supplies BOC brings out and from her own supplies of sorghum porridge. BOC provides enough for most of the family in addition to us, the guest. Thus we felt no burden on the basis for food supplies. As in Zaire, adults eat separately from the children.

I really realized that I was back in Africa from the sounds all about me all the time. Moshupa is a large village, a mile or two long and wide, but scattered widely over the sprawling site. Part of it lies between two high, sharply rising rock cliffs. That part of the village is perhaps only an eighth of a mile wide—only several courtyards wide. Very picturesque and beautiful. The rock cliffs rose abruptly behind our house, about 300 to 400 feet high, easily climbed to get an excellent view of village life. Up in these rocks were large quail. Their early morning and late evening calls let me know I was back in Africa. Going out in the middle of the night while all else lay still under the stars, I frequently heard whippoorwills. From dark until after I'd gone to sleep each evening children playing dancing-singing games again reminded me of where I was. Cowbells tinkle almost constantly as cattle are driven or just wander past in search of grass, now nearly absent at the end of winter. Donkeys braying with that sick sounding gasp of early morning life sounded more like Mexico than Africa to me. The terrain around Moshupa also looked much more like Mexico than one would expect to find in Africa. Up in the rocks on the mountains are also monkeys. Their morning chatter is another African sound that is always exciting to me. Also inhabiting the mountain is a baboon.



Sunday morning before sunrise, I climbed to the top of the cliff overlooking our part of the village to watch the village come to life. Oh what a sight as the sun came over the mountain and washed the village in its warm red glow! I could see people below me come out of their houses, wash their faces, comb hair, fetch water, turn the goats out of the kraal to graze, hitch up a team of donkeys, chickens began to forage for something to eat, children would come out and begin to play, sweep the courtyard, and cut firewood. Women started fires in their "kitchens"—outside enclosures of mud walls about waist high. While up there I was reading out of my New Testament and caught movement out of the corner of my eye. A monkey had come to investigate, his curiosity having gotten the best of him.

He came closer and closer on the tree top and then on the rocks to study me. Soon he was joined by many more adults and a whole bunch of tiny babies. On the way down from the mountain I saw lots of rock rabbits with no tails scurrying about.

Our daily schedule was to walk over to the house of our teacher from BOC for several hours of class, then we'd walk to some activity in the village, such as the clinic to see health services, wedding preparations or schools. In the afternoons we were usually free to rest and study. One of our activities during the week was to visit a traditional nyaka, doctor. He cast his bones and read a number of predictions for the future from the way they lay. He predicted we would "go with rain." I did not gain too much respect for his prowess at reading the bones because just then very dark clouds were already gathering and lightning and thunder was loud! The dry, rainless thunder and lightning of the end of dry season is another sound that is exciting, almost fearful to hear. Later that evening it did indeed rain a bit.

The most interesting visit I made was to the cartwright in the village. An old man with little hair, only one big ugly tooth, wrinkled browned skin, and a wry old smile that showed that tooth and betrayed an extraordinary warmth inside. This man is the preacher at the UCCSA church we attended Sunday, but sort of an insignificant figure, taking instructions from others who seem to be in charge. In visiting with this man I found he had lived the last forty years in Moshupa as a cartwright making

wagons, and also being a "missionary" at the church. He still works half-time at the church preaching and teaching classes. He had a middle-aged son and they have been making wagons here. These are no small donkey carts, but the big prairie schooner-like wagons with massive wooden wheels, iron tires, immensely heavy, taking four to six or more yokes of oxen to pull ploddingly along Botswana's dusty trails and desert out back. The old man showed me his lathe used to make the hubs of these massive wheels. The lathe was powered by two men turning a big wheel transmitting power by a cowhide thong belt to the lathe where stock was held between centers and the hubs turned out. It is no longer used; lighter carts on rubber tires and tractor-pulled wagons are replacing the old heavy wagons of an almost bygone era.

Now the two old men only repair wagons, repair wheels, replace parts, and keep the old existing wagons going. They were working on a wheel laid up across an old barrel for a handy height to work, putting in some new spokes of hard wood. As he talked of the old days and wagons he and his son had made, he lovingly stroked the hub of the old wheel that had covered who knows how many miles behind laboring oxen. He showed me the faint yellow line of decoration on the faded red hub and told me that they had made that wheel and how they used to decorate and paint them so nicely. Behind him was the forge built onto the side of the little workshop fired with charcoal made there in the yard, and fanned by a long wooden handle which operated giant bellows inside the shop. Scattered about under the trees and in the sunshine were pieces of broken-down wagons, wagons in various stages of repair. One wonders what volumes could be said about this family and the past 40 years of history in the little village of Moshupa.



An old ox wagon, Botswana



PATIENCE PATIENCE!

by Chuck Fennig

PATIENCE (pa shens) n. 1. The state or quality of being patient; specif.: a. The power of suffering or enduring with fortitude; uncomplaining endurance of wrongs or misfortunes, as toil, pain, poverty, insult, oppression, calamity, etc.*

Patience is a virtue; patience is one of the fruits of the Spirit; every true Christian should exhibit patience.

It seems so easy to make these kinds of statements about this often misunderstood gift. A little bit of waiting or putting up with the plodding ways of a friend is not so difficult, we say.

Patience has become a nice, pleasant-sounding word to many Christians. But, according to Webster, the word conveys some rather negative connotations, like "suffering" and "endurance of wrongs." How much suffering can we really take? Where do we cross the line of strained patience into the realm of impatience, anger and frustration?

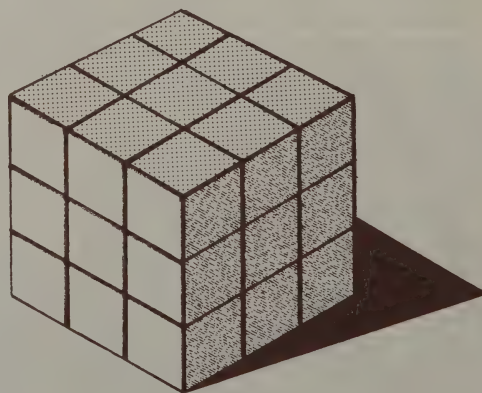
Since I have come to Zaire with AIMM under the General Conference's Overseas Missions Volunteer (OMV) program, the Lord has been teaching me what "real" patience is. I had always thought of myself as a Christian who had this particular fruit of the Spirit if nothing else. My work in Kinshasa, the capital city of Zaire, has exposed me to situations that have strained my "uncomplaining endurance" and brought me to that imaginary line where patience breaks down into anger or defeat.

I am assisting Earl and Ruth Roth in buying and expediting supplies to church/mission personnel in the interior of Zaire where most of AIMM's activity and ministry is concentrated. We also cut a lot of red tape to get those necessary things done, like getting visas, licensing vehicles and buying plane tickets.

Buying supplies may seem as easy as walking into the nearest department store, and licensing a car might mean a ten-minute visit to the local license branch. In Zaire, however, it may mean waiting days, weeks or months. As an example, I recently spent five consecutive mornings waiting for some licenses (registration, plates, etc.) for church vehicles standing in a sweltering office packed with people. The papers for one motorcycle have been lost and must be found; this means more time spent . . . waiting.

We are waiting for a barrel of alcohol (the non-beverage kind) which was ordered several months ago for our hospital at Kalonda. A couple of months after ordering it, we were informed that our license for buying and using alcohol was invalid, and that we would have to obtain another one. This meant another week-long process.

What is God's purpose in all this? Sometimes I think He must want to make me more frustrated or more bitter towards the system that pushes me into impatience. However, He is really showing me that He wants me to depend on Him completely for everything. I have learned that I certainly do not have the patience needed. As I let Christ live through me, He gives me the endurance I need for every situation.



*Webster's International Dictionary

Chuck Fennig is a short term worker in Zaire.
He grew up in East Africa as an MK.

THE WAY IT WAS

THROUGH THE Years

by Russell Schnell

It was at the age of 14 after listening to a missionary from the Charlesville station in the Congo that I was called to serve in Africa. The missionary was Sarah Kroeker Anderson, and she was speaking in our little Mennonite Church in Chicago that year of 1921. God kept this call constantly before me through all the years of preparation, in high school, at Moody Bible Institute and in College. And according to God's plans, Charlesville also became our first assignment in the Congo.

I was ordained in Chicago, September 11, 1932. After Helen and I were married two weeks later, we prepared to go out to Africa under the Congo Inland Mission (now AIMM) from the Central Conference of Mennonites in Illinois. We were called "Depression Kids" and funds were scarce, but the Lord provided in spite of all the obstacles, and we left for the field with a small outfit. We sailed from New York on November 3. After being on the S.S. West Kebar for fifty-five days, we landed at Matadi, Belgian Congo, December 28. After another two and a half weeks we finally arrived at Charlesville station January 16, 1933 where we received a heartwarming welcome.

At Charlesville I was assigned to establish a printing shop in the new office building. The old printing shop had been closed for several years and the equipment was in bad shape. It took a great deal of work to sort out the jumbled type, get the press in order and to train African apprentices to set type and run the press. However, with the Lord's help progress was made and the print shop expanded, becoming effective in supplying the stations with catechisms, songbooks, necessary forms, and other literature.

We were also assigned to the educational work, overseeing hundreds of students, teaching in the secondary school, and teaching teachers. One highlight of our Charlesville days was the bookstore which not only sold school supplies to the surrounding population, but also great quantities of Bibles in French and several African languages. It was a great pleasure to take several cases of Bibles on an itinerary trip and come back empty-handed. There was much demand for the Word of God. This led to the establishing of bookshops at Banga and Tshikapa stations later.



Setting type, Charlesville printshop

Charlesville





Our three terms of service at Charlesville covered the years from January 1933 to December 1950. At a field conference in 1949 a recommendation was made that the Schnell family be released from Charlesville to begin a new station on the plains at Banga. Outstation teachers from Charlesville had worked faithfully for years in the surrounding area. Many had sown seeds for decades, experiencing little or no harvest. Those early workers reaped sorrow instead of joy or rewards. While this region was an early choice of CIM for work, due to the obstinacy of the tribal group of that area it became among the last in opening up for a new station.

We moved to Banga on December 3, 1950. However, there had been some preliminary trips to build a bamboo and palm thatch house and kitchen. The new site was bare, void of trees. It overlooked a large ravine, at the bottom of which was a spring of water. Starting from scratch was hard work, but challenging. After a short time we found a supply of gravel, sand and stone, and planned a permanent dwelling of concrete block.

Within a short time there was a reaping after the years of sowing. On January 28, 1951, 108 young men and women were baptized and several marriages were performed. Banga station was responsible for a large land area of about 65 by 125 miles with a population of some 40,000 scattered among 300 villages. One complete itinerary trip covered 1000 miles, traversing many side roads.

A great joy at this station was establishing another bookshop. Literature distribution was very effective. We required that all students on the station have a New Testament or Bible.

One highlight at Banga was the dedication of the concrete block church building on February 28, 1960. It was a great occasion, attended by 2000 people, some traveling over 100 miles to get there. Two CIM Board members, Lotus Troyer and R. L. Hartzler attended the dedication.

Much free labor was donated by the Africans themselves. An aluminum roof for the church had been provided by two farmers from America. The church was built under trying and discouraging events. Lightning blew a hole in the back wall and because of superstition local people refused to continue work. A Pax man and one mason did the repair work. It was difficult putting up the big roof trusses. One broke in the process but finally, with the help of a big pulley, the job was completed.

Service in Banga Church, Russell Schnell



Russell and Helen Schnell share their testimonies in a continuing series on the experiences of former missionaries now retired from the field. The Schnells are at home in Glendale, Arizona.

Our stay at Banga was nearly ten years from December 1950 to June 1960. September 1961 we went to Tshikapa station to take care of office and educational work and a lot of difficulties with the newly independent African government. In September 1962 we were evacuated by the U.N. and we went to Kinshasa for a short stay. We came back to Tshikapa again after the U.N. sent in troops. After three hectic years at Tshikapa we left on May 23, 1964 for America. One of the most encouraging things at Tshikapa was the establishment of another bookstore. Here we sold many copies of the Bible in both French and African languages.

After retiring from the mission field, I was called to take a pastorate in Trenton, Ohio for four and a half years. We then worked among the Cheyenne Indians in Hammon, Oklahoma for a year. From there we went to Florida to retire, but could not as we felt we should still be in the Lord's work. So in 1973 we accepted a call to the Orange Lake Interdenominational Church of Largo, Florida. This is a church of some 140 members which we served until 1980.

For our services in Congo, both Helen and I received the Gold Medal of the Order of Leopold II, a recognition from the Belgian Government.

During all of our 47 years of service we have counted it a great privilege to be called into His service. The Lord has blessed and provided for our every need. Our motto through life has been,

"Only one life, 'twill soon be past,
Only what's done for Christ will last."

—Russell F. Schnell



Russell and Helen Schnell

Joys IN THE MIDST OF DIFFICULTIES

by Helen Schnell

Agnes Sprunger gave a missionary talk on Africa at the Eighth Street Mennonite Church in Goshen, Indiana when I was 14 years old. It was then that I first felt the call to go to Congo (now called Zaire). After I definitely felt I was called for Zaire I put all my efforts in my education to achieve that goal. As a Junior at Bluffton College I put in my application for Zaire in 1931. Rev. Amos Eash was at that time Congo Inland Mission secretary. He asked me to give a testimony at a retreat in Carlock, Illinois that June, and it was there I first met Russell who also had a call to Zaire.

Those early years included many difficulties. During our first term funds were delayed for months. All we could pay the evangelists was a small size cup of coarse salt. Schools and dispensaries were closed because of lack of funds during those Depression years.

From October 1938 to June 1947 we were on the field for nine years except for a six month short furlough spent in South Africa. As the Second World War came on we received no mail from the homeland for two months at a time. We thought the Rev. Roy Yoders, Omar Suttons, and Fanny Schmallenberger had been captured by the Germans enroute. The day we saw them riding into Charlesville station was a day to be remembered.

In 1946 we had a difficult time when Betty Yoder was quite sick and the Lord called our own little Rosalyn to Glory at the age of three weeks. But we leaned on our Lord and He gave guidance and courage and victory.

first bookshop



We had difficulty getting passage home in May and June 1947. Along with the Vernon Sprungers and Frank Enns' after our nine year term, we waited in Leopoldville (now Kinshasa) for three weeks and another three weeks in Matadi. Finally we left on a Norwegian freighter the middle of July, arriving in the USA on September 1.

The Lord has not promised "skies always blue," but we would much rather think of our joys and being able to serve our Lord and Master than to dwell on the past difficulties.

I think of the thrills and challenge we had as we started a new station in 1950 among the Bashilele people at Banga. How happy the Christians were when we came to live among them on December 3 of that year.

The following February practically all the school children came down sick with the flu. So did my brother, Ernie Yoder, who was working there for two years, and Russell, too. Russell would go through the village, in a coaster wagon pulled by someone as he was too weak to walk, giving out aspirin and atebine to those who were sick. Many school children left as they felt they did not want to die among strangers preferring to be at home in their own villages.

We had temporary bamboo schoolrooms and a chapel. One year a strong windstorm came and flattened them all to the ground. I remember going through desks of wet school books trying to salvage the good materials and starting school again on what materials we had. It was one of many incidents we lived through with God's help. I would sit on the porch of our bamboo home and "look unto the hills from whence comes our help." Psalm 121 became very dear to me. We depended upon the Lord for courage and guidance through the years at Banga. He always saw us through especially by sending the Keidels, Edigers, Barkmans, Aggie Friesen, and Anna Liechty as co-workers and helpers.

My happiest times were when I was out giving the Gospel in public meetings with the women, teaching the Bible in the school, and using flannelgraph in evangelistic meetings.

In 1961 the decision to go back with Russell to Zaire and leaving teenage daughters in America was very hard. Praying about it, and asking for guidance from the Lord helped me to gain victory, and I am not sorry I made that decision. Those last years of our service were very frustrating as we had to deal with people who had "Independence" but did not know how to handle it. However through it all I felt I was where the Lord wanted me and I had an inner peace that surpasses everything.

—Helen Schnell



Early Baptism, Village evangelism, 1941, Early grade school, 1933,

THE SAFETY OF A MISSIONARY

by Stan Nussbaum



In the February 1977 *Reader's Digest* the fourth article is "Time Runs Out for South Africa." It's all about how bad the political situation is there. The article immediately preceding it, "How You Can Worry Less." Those two coming side by side were a very interesting combination.

As we look at the South Africa situation, our family, living in Lesotho next to South Africa, has to think about possibilities which are unpleasant even though remote. It has been a healthy thing for us, and it would be a healthy thing for any Christian to look in the face of pain, or uncertainty, or even death—look it right in the face. I invite you to look at the safety of a missionary in three situations in Scripture. Pain, uncertainty, and death are closely related.

The first thing to notice about Biblical safety or missionary safety is that safety does not mean absence of pain. Look at safety and pain as presented in II Corinthians 11:26. Paul is talking about his personal experiences.

"I have been constantly on the move. I have been in danger from rivers, in danger from bandits, in danger from my own countrymen, in danger in the country, in danger at sea, and in danger from false brothers."

How safe was Paul through all of that? Safety does not mean pleasant circumstances for the missionary. Nor does it mean ignoring danger. Paul was let down in a basket over the wall of Damascus when he knew that the governor of the city had the gates guarded so Paul would be arrested. Now Paul didn't sit in Damascus and say, "I am the Lord's missionary; nobody can touch me. The King has guards there, but they'll never get me. I'm going to stay here and I'm going to walk and I'm going to preach and they can't touch me." Paul didn't say that. And he didn't walk out through the gate of Damascus when he was ready to go, assuming that he was immune to arrest. He sneaked out in the middle of the night, in a basket that may have smelled like fish, and probably when his feet hit the ground at the bottom of that wall, he was running.

Safety in Biblical terms does not mean ignoring danger. What does it mean? Safety is an issue. Paul was safeguarding his own life. He was escaping while he had the chance. Safety is an issue, but it is an issue that is secondary to one's mission. Mr. J. S. Shedd said, "A ship in the harbor is safe, but that is not what ships are built for." The first question a Christian asks is not, "How can I stay safe?" The first question he must ask is, "How can I accomplish my mission?" That's really what love is all about. As long as I'm thinking, "How can I stay safe?", I am thinking about myself! I'm watching out for my own interests. But when I start to think, "How can I accomplish my mission?", I am thinking about the people to whom I have been sent. Love is thinking about somebody else instead of just about myself.

This is also obedience—obedience to Christ. There is no verse in the Bible that says, "Thou shalt always do the safe thing." We all have that desire built into our own personalities. We want to take care of ourselves. We don't need a chapter and verse to tell us that. But there are plenty of other commands about carrying out a mission.

Paul lost his safety, or it appears that he lost his safety—he was arrested, put in jail, and kept there for at least two years; he could not travel, could not preach in a church, and could not visit the churches that he had established—his safety was gone. This did not stop him from accomplishing his mission. Letters we have in our Bible were written while Paul was in jail. A ruler who wants to live dangerously need only put a thinking man in prison because while there, he has time to think and write. It's been true of many others. It was true of Paul. An apparent loss of safety does not necessarily mean that the person cannot accomplish his mission, and the mission is what is really important.

continued on page 12

Consider Safety and Uncertainty in Luke, Chapter 4, where Jesus stood up in the synagogue in Nazareth and began his public ministry. The people took him out of the town to throw him off a cliff. Safety and uncertainty in abundance!

At what point in this sequence of events did it become clear to Jesus that he was safe? He was preaching in the synagogue which should have been a safe place. The people, instead of listening quietly, got up and said, "We're not going to listen to this fellow any more," and drove him out of town. This is a lynch mob in action. No court, no trial, no justice—just a mad urge to kill. They seized him, and he wasn't safe. They got him out of the building, down the street, out of the town, to the edge of the cliff. Then it simply says, "He walked right through the crowd and went on his way." How did he do that? I've wondered how one walks right through a mob. I don't know. He was safe. He didn't seem to be safe in the synagogue. They had him, and they were taking him out of town to kill him. But when he needed his safety, he had it.

In John 7 the chief priests sent the temple guards to arrest Jesus while he was teaching in the temple in Jerusalem. One thing a soldier always does is obey orders. If the commanding officer issues an order, there is no time to discuss it or to consider alternatives. Obedience is required. The temple guards got an order from the commander to go and arrest Jesus. So they went, but they listened to what Jesus had to say. Just see those Roman soldiers impressed by what Jesus was saying, yet knowing they had their orders to arrest him. If they tried to arrest him, the people would all be very angry at them. What could they do? Here are guards, standing around and saying to each other, "Well, come on, arrest him." "No, I don't want to arrest him, you arrest him." "No, not me, you do it." They were passing the buck back and forth trying to get somebody to go, and finally they all gave up. They went back to their commander and said, "We didn't bring him." He could not understand why they could not arrest that man. John tells us, "Jesus' time had not yet come." Jesus was safe because his time had not yet come.



We see the same principle in the book of Acts. James was put in prison and killed. Herod saw that the Jews were very happy that he had killed one of the Christian leaders so he imprisoned another one, this time Peter. Peter had his trial on the night before he was to be executed. Death would follow immediately. There were no lawyer's appeals, no supreme court stays, no hope. Peter managed to sleep that night and as he slept, the angel made his chains fall off and opened the gates for him. Peter went to the house where the believers were having a prayer meeting, and from there he left town.

Now why was James killed and Peter let go? Both were leaders in the church, and the Lord loved both of them. Was it because Peter was going to be more effective than James? Was it because the Church needed Peter more than it needed James? I don't have any idea why God arranged the situation that way. But James' time had come, and Peter's time had not come. Peter was safe even though he was in an apparently hopeless situation.

We don't know the future, and we don't have our safety for next year. We get our safety when we need it. As Christians we're invincible until the Father allows. In I Corinthians 10:13 God will not allow anything bigger than we can handle to come our way. We are safe, we are untouchable until God says okay. The Christian's question is not "Will God give me another day alive?" "Am I going to make it through this crisis?" These are not the Christian's questions when he's faced with uncertainty. Not "Will I see tomorrow?", but "If God gives me tomorrow, how will I use it to serve him?" That's the question.

Christian safety is not safety from death. It is safety in spite of death. There are two words that come from the same root, Safe and Save. Salvation and safety come from the same word. And what is important about that for us is that there is no safety, there is no real safety, that does not have an eternal dimension to it. MacArthur said there is no security in this whole world, only opportunity. There is no safety that does not take into account eternity. There is no safety without salvation. Risking their lives for Christ, safety and death, that was a fairly common thing in the early church.

Christian safety does not always mean safety from death. What we do know we find in the last three verses of I Corinthians 15, the climax to the resurrection chapter.

"The sting of death is sin, and the power of sin is the law. But thanks be to God who gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ. Therefore, dear brothers, stand firm. Let nothing move you. Always give yourselves fully to the work of the Lord because you know that your labor in the Lord is not in vain."

The world today believes that death is the worst thing that can happen to us. According to the scriptures, death is a certainty for everyone of us. Unless the Lord comes back before we die, we are all going to die. Yet, death loses its sting for the Christian. The question a Christian asks is not "How can I escape death?" or "How can I stay alive as long as possible?" The question he asks is, "How can I do God's will while I am alive?" Death, physical death, is not the worst thing in the world. Disobedience is. Disobedience is spiritual death. Disobedience is being dead. If I say, "I am dead to the world," it means that I am not paying any attention to it. To disobey God is to be spiritually dead, to be unresponsive to God's directions and commands. In order to be safe from disobedience each one of us must come to a point in life where he says, "Not my will but thine be done." Because we are safe as Christians, we are safe as long as we are in God's will.

Where would the church be today if missionaries had always gone to the safe place? Where would the church be today if Christians had always done the safe things—the things they were sure they could afford to do? Where would the church be if Christians always asked themselves, "How can I stay safe?" "How can I escape or at least postpone death?"

The questions that a Christian should be asking—"How can I accomplish my mission?", "How will I use another day if God gives it to me?", "How can I do God's will?"—all lead to one question. The question is, "What are you ready to risk?"



Agave Aloe, Lesotho



GOING . . .

Titus and Karen Guenther began a special two year assignment in Lesotho in October 1981. In response to an invitation from the Lesotho Evangelical Church AIMM agreed to supply a person to serve as Protestant chaplain at the National University of Lesotho (NUL).

NUL is located 15 miles east of Maseru in the town of Roma. With the position of the chaplaincy are responsibilities to relate to a local congregation, as well as some opportunities for teaching at both the University and at a Theological College in nearby Morija. The Lesotho Evangelical Church is the nation's largest and oldest Protestant denomination. It was founded by the Paris Evangelical Missionary Society beginning in 1833.

Titus Guenther, son of David and Margaretha Guenther was born and raised in the Menno Colony in Paraguay. After graduating from Canadian Mennonite Bible College in 1974, Titus earned degrees at the University of Manitoba and the University of St. Michael's College in anthropology and theology. He was ordained September 20, 1981.

Karen is from Altona, Manitoba, the daughter of Alfred and Ann Loewen. She is a graduate of CMBC and the University of Waterloo.

The Guenthers were commissioned by their congregation, Toronto United Mennonite Church. Enroute to southern Africa the Guenthers stopped in Paraguay to visit family and friends as well as to reestablish contact with Titus' home church. Their daughter Angelika celebrated her first birthday in Lesotho, November 30.



Don and Norma Friesen left Saskatchewan January 11, 1982 for Belgium and language study at Brussels. They will then move to Kananga, Zaire to begin ministries at an inter-church radio programming organization called Studiproka. Other responsibilities will include being support persons for AIMM workers far removed from the supplies and resources of the city of Kananga. Kananga is on the rail line in south central Zaire, east of most of AIMM's centers.

Don graduated from Swift Current Bible Institute and earned a Broadcast Diploma from S.A.I.T. in Calgary, Alberta. He is the son of Dick and Helen Friesen of Saskatoon.

Norma is a graduate of Bienenberg Bible Institute of Liestal, Switzerland and attended the University of Lethbridge. Daughter of Jacob and Marie Klassen of Lethbridge, Alberta, Norma also has a Diploma as Dental Assistant from Calgary.

The Friesens are members of the Wildwood Mennonite Church of Saskatoon.

GOING OUT . . .



Virgil and Mary Kay Gerig are due to leave in early March for Lesotho. Rev. Gerig will provide pastoral leadership at the Maseru United Church in Lesotho's capital city. This international congregation ministers in the English language to a mobile community, many of whom are involved in assistance and development programs in this southern African nation. AIMM has related to the interdenominational church since 1974.

The Gerigs will be leaving Elkhart, Indiana where they have worked with the Hively Avenue Mennonite Church for the past four and a half years. Prior to coming to Elkhart, the Gerigs served churches in Smithville, Ohio, Pandora, Ohio, and Freeman, South Dakota. Smithville was also their home community before beginning these 34 years of pastoring.

The date of arrival in Lesotho is March 18, a moment long awaited by the Maseru congregation since they have operated for more than a year without a resident pastor.

GOING BACK . . .

Henry and Naomi Unrau returned to Botswana January 18 after their first furlough. Henry works as Director of Religious Broadcasting for the national network of Radio Botswana. Both Henry and Naomi are active in local church and community ministries.

With their three daughters, Beth, Rebecca, and Julia, they left British Columbia January 8, stopping in Nairobi, Kenya enroute to Botswana. The Unraus are members of the Olivet Mennonite Church, Clearbrook, B.C.



Herman and Ruth Buller returned to Zaire in January for a fifth term of service. They will again be assigned to the CMZA center at Tshikapa where Herman will give assistance to the treasurer. Herman has worked as treasurer and assistant treasurer during past terms as well as helping with the accounting for the medical work at Kalonda.

The Buller's return to Zaire was delayed by a blizzard in Elkhart and South Bend the day they were to leave. Two days later they were able to depart and arrived in Kinshasa January 14.

The Buller's home congregation is the Bethel Mennonite Church of Hydro, Oklahoma.



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EDITORIAL

THE JOY OF MISSIONS

Missions can be dramatized by the difficult. It can appeal through despair. It can prompt prayer with the threat of defeat. But missions is also a life of joy. It should be and it can be.

Missions can be fun though it isn't always. Missions involves victory and growth though not continuously. There is planting without immediate harvest and dark valleys as well as table spread. But through it all joy can still be the portion of missionary, national church leader, and sending congregation alike. Joy in obedience. Joy in being in God's will. Joy in being part of a victorious, eternal Kingdom.

The key is "His joy," not "our joy." It is learning to "rejoice in the Lord" not finding joy in our circumstances. It can be expressed as "rejoicing in the Lord's joy."

Yes, God is a joyous God. Jesus Himself "rejoiced in the Spirit" in Luke 10:21. And He did so because He saw the larger picture as he said, "Even so, Father; for so it seemed good in thy sight." That in which the Father took pleasure gave the Son reason to rejoice.

It does not mean God is happy about the condition of the world or the plight of mankind. But He rejoices in His perfect sovereign plan. And Missions is a commissioned part of His plan. No wonder we can sing "The Joy of the Lord is my strength."

The great Chinese disciple, Watchman Nee wrote, "When tempted to be cast down, look up and ask yourself, 'Has the Lord lost His joy today?'"

"Only if He has may you be content to be joyless. For it is not a question of your joy but His." The joy of the Lord is our strength.

—RWG



Newborn at Mukedi Maternity Center, Zaire



MESSENGER

Africa Inter-Mennonite Mission, Inc.

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in this issue —

- PAGE 3 : KOMBO'S FARM by Arnold Harder
PAGE 5 : A NIGHT AT THE LANDS by Fremont Regier
PAGE 7 : FOLLOWING MY FATHER'S WILL by Tim Bertsche
PAGE 8 : THE LORD WAS FAITHFUL by Dr. Merle Schwartz
PAGE 9 : BLESSED ABOVE OUR DESERVING by Dorothy Schwartz
PAGE 11 : A PAINTER NAMED EZEKIEL by Jonathan Larson
PAGE 12: THOUGHTS OF DUSTY PATHS by Lora Oyer
PAGE 14: WHERE IN THE WORLD an AIMM Directory
PAGE 16: NOT MY SHOES, LORD by Robert Gerhart

Arnold Harder at Nyanga, Zaire works with agriculture in the SEDA program of the Zaire Mennonite Church.

Tim Bertsche, an AIMM "MK", is a ministerial student at Trinity Evangelical Divinity School in Deerfield, IL.

Dr. and Mrs. Merle Schwartz served for thirty-five years in Zaire. They share reflections on these years of medical ministry in the continuing series: The Way It Was.

Lora Oyer attended the Mennonite World Conference General Council meetings in Nairobi, Kenya, last summer. Enroute she visited Zaire and observed some of AIMM's ministries.

the cover —

Day of birth, January 22, 1981, Zaire Photo by Bob Gerhart

The Zamzam Adventure

Dr. and Mrs. Merle Schwartz must hold the record for length of journey to get to their field of service in Africa. Starting out March 20, 1941, they sailed from New York on the Egyptian ship, the *Zamzam*. There were more than 120 missionaries on board among the 202 passengers. Sailing through the Caribbean and to Brazil the *Zamzam* turned to cross the Atlantic in early April. On the 17th it was sighted, then shelled by a German raider named the *Tamessis*. Passengers and crew abandoned ship and after the survivors were picked up by the German vessel, the *Zamzam* was sunk by explosives.

Passengers and crew were transferred to another German ship, the *Dresden* on which they were held prisoners for 4½ weeks while sailing in a roundabout way northwards. Finally, after the risky running of the British blockade, they landed on the coast of occupied France. British subjects were held as prisoners of war but the Americans were allowed to travel through Spain to Portugal from where they obtained passage to New York, arriving back at "square one" on June 24, 1941.

On August 2, 1942 the Schwartzes again set sail from New York, this time arriving safe, sound, and grateful in the Congo, September 25, 1942, eighteen months after starting out, having spent 129 days on the sea on five ships.

The story of the *Zamzam* is illustrated in detail in the June 23, 1942 issue of LIFE magazine, Vol. 10, No. 25, which you may find in your local library.

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Kombo's field of maize



Kombo Kasongo in Zaire

KOMBO'S FARM

by Arnold Harder

Kombo Kasongo is interested in any good ideas. We started working with this village farmer when we first came to Zaire. It was still called Congo back in 1969. He is open to ideas which will help him progress in his farming experience. Today I visited his farm.

From Nyanga, we first go 13 kilometers west to the Treize (a crossroad), the only exit from Nyanga. Here we go five kilometers south and then turn east 17 kilometers to the main road to Tshikapa. We turn off and go eight kilometers to his homestead. Kombo's farm is 555 hectares or 1370 acres. The road was dry today. Many trucks had churned up the sand so it was like driving on ice and snow to keep my 125 Yamaha trail bike upright. The 35 kilometers (21½ miles) took 1½ hours, so you see how slow it went.

Kombo has moved two times since I first met him. In the early 70's all the interested farmers lived in the village and tried to do their work from the village base. Kombo soon saw, however, that he could not give enough attention to his crops and animals from the village so he moved to a village close to Nyanga. Here he began to farm, using local methods with all the new techniques and inputs we could give him. He soon found that the soil was not fertile enough so he began looking at other valleys to see if he could find better soil. The soil in this area is at best poor, compared to North American Midwest soils. He found what he wanted, 15 kilometers to the south of Nyanga in the Saka Valley. There was forest land on each side of a clean water creek. He asked for and received homestead rights.

The eight-kilometer trip from the main road to his farmstead looks like it goes off into nowhere. There is knee-high grass on either side of a narrow foot path just wide enough for the cycle. I could see evidence of clearing a road for trucks to come in to pick up produce. Going down the last hill into the valley I came upon some manioc fields and as I skirted the end of the field six grass-roofed buildings and about a dozen citrus trees, about 12 feet tall, came into view. Farther on I saw a number of small buildings housing his rabbits, ducks and local chickens. As I dismounted from my motorcycle everyone gathered around to say hello and shake hands.

The immediate area looked clean and well swept. The children looked healthy and showed evidence of good nutrition and care. Kapoko, the last man to join the cooperative, was making a bamboo bed when I arrived. Kombo understood right away that he could not do by himself what he saw needed to be done. So he has associated with two other innovative men.

First came the tour to show what had been done. We walked about 100 yards, then went down a very steep grade to the valley floor. Here there were hundreds of plantains (a type of banana tree) and a small garden from which he sends produce to Nyanga to sell. There were three hectare-size (2.5 acres each) fields of manioc, one field for every year he had been there since 1978. The 1980 field looked good, almost ready to harvest. I saw where the manioc roots are soaked in the stream to remove the cyanic acid; where they stacked the roots on a rock with a fire underneath and using the sun above to hasten the drying process. He showed his ideas for erosion control, something he will work at in the future.

The land that was cleared reminded me of pictures of early pioneer days with stumps standing beside green corn plants. We ducked under or crawled over logs in walking through his fields.

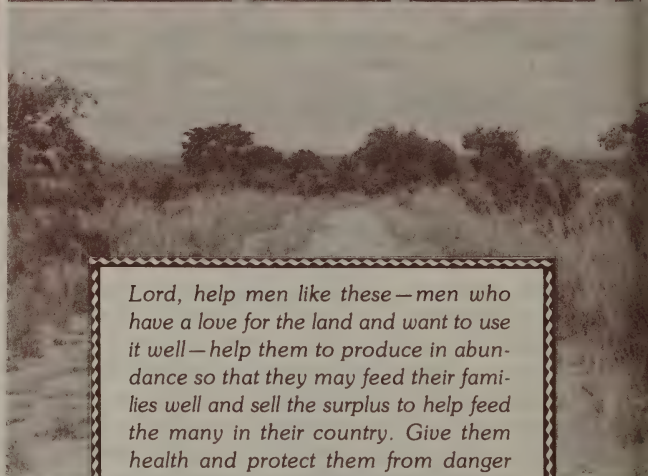
We looked at his eight fish ponds. What beautiful pieces of work, terraced into the hillside one above the other. He harvests each pond twice a year.

These three men and the two hired workmen have no machines with which to do all this work. They have only the hand tools—ax, shovel, short-handled hoe, a machete. They have no animals with which to plow the fields. All is hoed by hand. A plow wouldn't be able to go through the roots. They are looking for cattle so they can train a pair of oxen to help haul the produce to the main road. The day I was there the chiefs had gathered together to decide about a new road crossing the Saka River close to Kombo's farm and going straight to Nyanga. If this road goes through he would be close enough to set up his market stall and sell directly to anyone coming by.



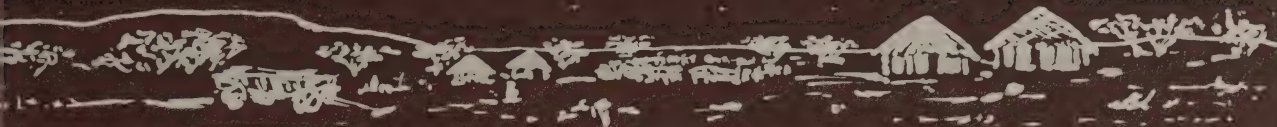
▲ Above: Clearing new fields;

► Right, from top: Kombo's fish ponds; Building with local materials; Down the road.



Lord, help men like these—men who have a love for the land and want to use it well—help them to produce in abundance so that they may feed their families well and sell the surplus to help feed the many in their country. Give them health and protect them from danger in their fields. Bless their efforts and their fields with abundance. Amen.





A NIGHT AT THE LANDS

by Fremont Regier

The weathered old man dropped the dead goat kid at the entrance of the kitchen. He muttered something about careless cattle herders. A young woman moved it with her toe and saw that it was not yet stiff.

In the light of the near-full moon I examined the contents of this desert kitchen. The kitchen was a large enclosure about 20 feet square fenced with heavy posts stuck next to each other in the ground about shoulder height and strong to keep cattle out. Only one narrow doorway allowed entrance. Half the area was covered with a low thatched grass roof. A pile of firewood in one corner, several black three-legged cooking pots, and a few other supplies stacked in another corner were about all I could make out in the pale light.

I was on my way to visit MCC workers Luke Meyers and Lucille Teichert at Pitseng, Botswana. I got a lift to this "lands home." From here I would set off on foot early tomorrow hoping to beat the heat of the Kalahari over the remaining 25 kilometers to their village.

I walked about in the moonlight to see what else the rustic compound held. There were two rondavels in the compound, round mud-walled houses with peaked grass roofs held up by a center pole. Between the two rondavels, a large threshing floor was paved with cow dung. The floor also served as a catchment area. In one corner of the floor a shallow open cistern had been dug. Stones set in concrete lined the cistern to catch rain water, the most precious of all commodities here in the desert. Nothing more than several light showers had fallen for many months now and the cistern was dry and dusty.

Some small ox-drawn implements lay about in the moonlight. Nearby were several water barrels used to transport water from the nearest bore hole many kilometers away. In an open barrel I could see a nest of eggs—a thin line of continuing existence for the scraggly flock of chickens. Several small thorn bushes were the closest thing to trees. It was obvious that they would provide very little shade in the heat of the day.

When we arrived just at dark in the little Toyota pickup the compound had looked deserted. I got the impression that the five or six adults and several children on the pickup were the only people for miles around. But in the kitchen coals still glowed. One of the women blew them alive and started the cooking fire immediately upon our arrival. I could hear cattle and goats being put into a kraal somewhere nearby, so it was obvious that we were not completely alone on the edge of the Kalahari. The boys who were left in charge of the cattle and goats must be somewhere.

A chair of rough sticks laced with strips of cowhide was offered me. I sat in the moonlight wondering about the small group of people who were my hosts this night. The only English I heard all evening was when one of the young women who knew a bit got up her courage to speak to me. She told me the people where I was going in Pitseng were really "primitive because they speak only Setswana there!" I had arranged for the lift from Moshupa village where I had spent several days in Setswana study. My friend in Moshupa knew the man planned to go back to the lands and had arranged the ride for me. I'd never seen any of these folks before and here I was, their guest, miles from nowhere, out in the desert, on their lands.

Many Botswana families have three homes, i.e., a home in the village (Moshupa, in this case) where they live during the non-farming, dry winter; a "lands home" where they go to plow when the rains begin (our location this night) and a cattle post where most of their cattle are kept. At this "lands home" they had a small herd of cattle for plowing and a herd of 200 goats. Their large cattle herd was at their cattle post elsewhere.

The old man skinned the dead kid, cut it and put it in a pot to boil over the fire. Occasionally he opened the pot to stir the meat and add salt. One of the women boiled water and made bog^{*}obe, a sour sorghum porridge. It's made with fresh flour and a cultured flour-water mixture maintained from day to day as in yoghurt making. An older couple and young child stopped at the compound to give greetings and moved on in the moonlight to another lands settlement.

~~~~~ continued on next page

\*in Setswana the "g" is pronounced as the German "ch" as in the word "ach."

*Fremont Regier, AIMM missionary in Botswana has previously worked in Zaire. He is designated to become the coordinator of Mennonite Ministries, an umbrella under which AIMM and MCC will operate their programs in Botswana.*

# ON THE EDGE OF THE KALAHARI DESERT

One of the young women helping in the kitchen brought me a large, deep bowl of steaming bogobe and a spoon. I began eating. Similar bowls were brought to the other men sitting about. The evening air was getting uncomfortably cool. Later the old man took his meat off the fire and began noisily chewing bone and gristle along with the meat. He asked me if I liked goat meat and, assured that I did, he got a plate from the kitchen and gave me two large pieces of the small carcass. He told me it had been killed by a cow stepping on it. It was delicious, very very tender, and resembled rabbit in flavor and consistency. I ate what I could, consciously fortifying myself for the long walk tomorrow, and gave the rest back to the old man. After he and I had had our fill he put what was left in a bowl up on the roof of the kitchen where it would be safe from the dog.

One of the girls brought me a pan of warm water and said I could bathe. This was another special privilege offered the guest as no one else bathed that night. I set the pan on a bench and, as others sat about listening to a beat up old transistor radio setting on the tailgate of the Toyota, I took off my shirt, shoes and socks and bathed in the moonlight. I hung my towel on the kitchen fence to dry in the arid night air. The warm water and cold air made an invigorating combination.

I went for a short walk out into the field. When I came back my pack and water bottle were gone. The old man told me I'd sleep in the nearest rondavel and showed me my bed. In the dim lantern light I could make out cowhides hung up in the rondavel, some supplies to one side and two beds in addition to mine. The beds were several heavy blankets spread on a cow skin on the dirt floor. Mine had the added comfort of a thin foam rubber mat. A woman and small child were already on one bed and the old man settled down on the other. I took off my pants and shirt and slipped into my sheet-sewed-into-a-sack Sara had made for me. The old man blew out the lantern. I thought of all the nights I had spent in such a sheet-sack in Zaire where I had to pull the sack over my head as protection from mosquitoes. Cow bells tinkled and occasionally a calf would bawl from the kraal. Before long I woke up. The cold desert night air had crept inside the rondavel. I flopped the edge of the heavy blanket over me and thought of the temperature change from noon when it had been over 100 degrees Fahrenheit!

Once during the night the child cried and the old man told it to come to him. About 5:00 in the morning when there was still only dim pre-dawn light, the old man got up, slid the piece of tin from the opening to the rondavel and went out. I got up, dressed, gathered my sheet-sack into my bag and also went out. I noticed only the child left sleeping. Evidently the woman had left us to sleep in the other rondavel after she had put the child to sleep.

I greeted the old man who was wearing a long, heavy overcoat. I asked him for a bit of water to drink and to wash my face. I tied up my sack and water bottle, told the old man my thanks and good-bye and set off on foot into the Kalahari desert towards Pitseng. It would be 12 to 15 miles on a road filled with deep sand. As I left, the old man let the cattle and goats out of the kraal and they flanked the path I was on, going out to search for dried up bits of grass.

Large black and white birds, called maaka-we, squawked and cackled as they rose from the desert into the morning air. Soon the sun rose—a brilliant fiery ball—and sent warming shafts of red light across what looked to be an endless stretch of tufted dry grass and thorn bushes in the sand. The path turned east and I walked into that red light contemplating the night past and the day ahead.



*Traditional ox-drawn sled in Botswana*



In *Our Daily Bread*, Dennis DeHaan relates the story of a minister who received a call from a church that offered him a salary four times what he was then receiving. Being a devout man, he spent much time in prayer trying to discern what God wanted him to do. A friend met the minister's young son on the street. "Do you know what your Dad is going to do?" he asked. "Well," replied the youngster, "Dad's praying, but Mom's packing!"

This story illustrates for us a dilemma we all share — how do we discern our location in God's will for us? This certainly applies when we think about following God's will throughout the continents.

The final step in following our Father's will is just that. Follow it! Obedience is the last hurdle to cross. If and when you feel that God is directing you a certain way, go. It has been said that often our greatest disappointments are the result of God granting to us our very own prayers. Don't pray asking God not to have you do this or send you there. He just might answer that request. If He does, you may spend your life missing out on God's very best for you — the work and place where He had wanted to give you His richest blessings and fulfillment.



## FOLLOWING MY FATHER'S WILL

When I was in college, there were three basic questions that plagued me and I would venture a guess that they are the same for most college students. The questions were these: 1) Where am I going to go when I finish? 2) What am I going to do? 3) Who am I going to be? This is the blueprint that we would like God to unfold for us all at once.

While these are the right kinds of questions to be asking in seeking God's will, I suggest that they are in the wrong order. I can not find in Scripture where God gives us a clear indication of preferred geographical locations for us to serve. Nor can I find in Scripture a list of the top ten vocations He would like us to choose. However, I find many places in God's Word where He outlines for us who He wants us to be. This is how Scripture tells us to follow our Father's will:

- Eph 6 Obey those in authority over you
- Col 4:2 Stand firm, mature, fully assured in the Lord
- I Th 4:3 Be holy
- I Th 5:18 Give thanks in all circumstances
- Heb 13:21 Be equipped with everything good
- I Pet 2:15 Do good
- I Pet 4:2 Be willing to suffer in the body, that you might be done with sin
- I Jn 2:17 Do not love the world, do not boast about what you are or what you have done
- I Jn 2:23 Obey His command: Believe in Jesus Christ and love one another

There are countless opportunities across the continents to follow our Father's will. When we have accepted the task of developing our gifts and talents, when we have committed ourselves to the process of spiritual maturity and becoming conformed to the image of Christ, we are in His will. Then somewhere along the way, God will make it clear that He has chosen a specific location for us, partly because of our skills and abilities, but perhaps even more so, because of who we are and who we are willing to become.

God has already given 90% of His will for us, and it has nothing to do with a vocation or a location. It is to become conformed to the image of Christ. This internal process, and it will take a lifetime, is what we should concentrate on. As we develop and mature in this process, our vocation and location, which are secondary in importance, will become clearer. They will follow as a natural result of our being in fine tune with the Lord.

Be willing to follow God's will wherever He leads. He may lead you to many different tasks on several different continents during your life. Where and what is not so important; being at the center of His will in mind and spirit is.

So following our Father's will throughout the continents demands obedience. Be open to His leading. Be listening for His direction. Make it a matter of prayer. But when the answer comes, be willing to start packing.

— Tim Bertsche



presented at the Evangelical Mennonite Church Convention, August 8, 1981

# THE WAY IT WAS



For an explanation of the Zamzam episode which Dr. and Mrs. Schwartz experienced please turn to page 2.

Dr. Schwartz with medical van, Mukedi  
Medical van boarding river ferry  
Mukedi, Zaire



Merle and Dorothy Schwartz in earlier days

## THE LORD WAS FAITHFUL

by Merle Schwartz

Fifty years or half a century covers a good share of one's life. But in God's time table it must be such a minute speck! The years 1927 to 1929 were heart searching and prayerful times of seeking God's will as a teenager. I felt a definite call to be a missionary in the summer of 1929 when the needs of CIM were presented at a young people's retreat. A preaching or teaching ministry seemed outside my abilities but I did feel that with God's help I might be able to serve as a physician. Twelve years of preparation followed during which the Lord led and guided until Dorothy and I finally sailed to Congo in 1941. One has difficulty in understanding God's plans and purposes at times. Another year and a half, including the *Zamzam* experience, delayed our reaching Mukedi, this in addition to those twelve years of preparation. But the Lord knew that I needed these further experiences. I can't recall doubting my call. His presence was real.

When we arrived at Mukedi in November 1942 we found very primitive facilities with which to attempt to practice medicine and surgery as we had been taught. But again the Lord was faithful in providing the strength and help needed to improvise and meet some of the demands of need around us. There followed years of multiplied activities! Training African helpers to care for the hundreds who came was a prime necessity. Getting larger and more adequate buildings to house the various activities was a continuing program. Getting supplies to provide for a growing program was a constant struggle. As the buildings and equipment became more sophisticated more time and skills were needed to keep it all functioning. One became a jack-of-all-trades—mechanic, electrician, plumber—to name a few. Many days these various activities were interspersed between surgical operations, medical consultations and obstetrical emergencies. It was a busy but joyful time.

Perhaps the greatest joys and the deepest sorrows were both provided by the staff of African helpers. A few became reliant, faithful Christian workers with whom it was a joy to work. A few developed into Satan's disciples and were the source of sorrow and disappointment. But most were ordinary Christians with human frailties like most of us.

It was a joy to see the response of many patients to the loving care received from devoted staff members and the response to the Good News of God's love and salvation as explained by the spoken word. It was a joy to see the growth of the church and the love, devotion, and dedication of many individuals. But there was sorrow when there was back-sliding or a return by some to old heathen customs.

There was much disappointment when so many turned away from God and the church in 1960 following Independence. But there was joy and rejoicing again when in a few short months there was the beginning of repentance and a return to the Lord. 1964 brought much trouble and persecution to the Mukedi area. It was a time of testing—and those who trusted the Lord grew stronger from their experiences. A great disappointment following the crises of those years was the apparent rejection of the Lord and His way of love by one of the most talented of our medical staff. But only God knows the heart and can judge honestly.

By 1969 we were able to return to Mukedi to help with rebuilding the physical plant and to help and encourage the African staff. The love and devotion that many of the humble folk at Mukedi demonstrated provides a lesson of unknown value to all of us who are so much more wealthy materially. This must be one of the greatest values to be gleaned from these years of working with the people of Congo or Zaire.

Since retirement from Zaire my medical activity has been limited to consulting service at the Meadows Mennonite Home in Illinois. Other activities include church work in our church at Carlock and some volunteer duties at Mennonite Hospital in Bloomington. These are in addition to keeping up a house, lawn, and garden. The Lord has blessed mightily through the years and continues to do so.

© Schwartzes in more recent times



Bedside nursing, Dorothy Schwartz at Mukedi

## BLESSED ABOVE OUR DESERVING

by Dorothy Schwartz

Being reared in a Christian home by parents interested in missions had much to do with my own personal concern for the needs of foreign missions. My father's voiced desire that one of his children be a missionary in Africa was also a factor. When my own call meshed with a similar call of my friend, Merle, we responded by applying to and being accepted by the mission board in 1939 before we were married.

Having our ship the *Zamzam* sunk and losing all our possessions on our first trip in 1941 seemed no real deterrent to our call. Both of us felt God's leading to try again as soon as possible.

Building up a medical service from a meager beginning seemed a big job to two young people. God never let us down. Learning to use what we had was a part of life. When our ideas and strengths were not enough God supplied what was needed. The hospital was our life. I helped the African staff in sterilizing, preparing patients for surgery, assisting in surgery, and in doing the varied tasks that go with running a small hospital. We set up an obstetrical ward where the number of patients and babies born increased from thirty-five the first year to an average of five a day during our last term. What opportunities this gave to serve and witness to women; women with whom we fellow-shipped daily as well as those who came from afar and whom we would not likely see again. It gave opportunity not only to serve them as patients but to teach hygiene, pre- and post-obstetrical care, baby care, and of course, Bible stories.

continued on next page



*Teamwork in ministry*

I remember most vividly one woman coming from tribes people, who were historically enemies of the tribe among whom we were located. She said that she and her husband braved the taunts and warnings of their people in coming to us. They were told that the white people would likely kill them or that the tribes people would deny them food and shelter. But after having lost four babies they were ready to face almost anything to have a live child. We had several months before the baby was due to treat her medically and to minister to them spiritually. They were impressed by the loving concern of the 'enemy tribe.' God answered prayer and gave them a beautiful normal baby. They left with newness of life in Jesus Christ. This one experience would have been enough to make all our years there worthwhile.



*Present Mukedi medical staff: Dr. Keta Binza with lab technician in foreground*

My task there was really being a helpmeet to the doctor. It ranged from supervising nursing care, assisting in surgery when needed, running the pharmacy so medicines were available, and at times carrying on as well as I could when he was called away.

For one period of time I was in charge of the girls compound, but mostly my work outside of medical work was with the women. It worked in well with the contacts through the pre-natal clinics, their stay at the maternity hospital, and with treating their sick babies and families. Sewing classes were started along with studies in Bible and in nutrition. The close friendships built at that time will never be forgotten.

Overseeing the guest house was often my job as many of our guests were also patients. For several years Merle was the only doctor in the area.

In 1960 with Independence came our leaving the country. Then we spent one term of service at Tshikapa as Mukedi was closed to foreigners. Here again my contribution was almost entirely in the medical field since we were in a new language area. I learned enough Tshiluba to help staff the pharmacy. Later I worked in the maternity hospital. These days brought greater dependence on God as we were tested again and again, working with local authorities, tribal differences, lack of medicines and shortage of hospital necessities.

1974 brought retirement after 34 years with CIM and AIMM. After a year's furlough, opportunity presented itself for one more year in Zaire. This last year was mostly aiding missionaries—helping Lois Slagle in the pharmacy, being station hostess to our many guests, and acting as station "grocery-man." This meant getting the orders together and then on the arrival of the groceries to divide them out and bill the recipients. Language prevented much closeness with the African community, which was at first difficult to accept. But God showed me there were other ways to serve.

The 35 years we were privileged to serve were good years. God blessed us far above our deserving. We would do it over again were we to choose. Hopefully I could do better if I had the chance.

I came home from our last year with some heart impairment. This keeps me from active work in nursing which I had always expected to do. However I rejoice in being able to do volunteer work at Mennonite Hospital and Meadows Mennonite Home. It gives me all the outside activity I can carry along with our church life, teaching Sunday School class, prayer group and other church activities.

My real joy is in knowing I belong to Him. He has bought us with a price. How great that we don't need worry or to wonder what the future holds. We only trust Him for all things.



# A PAINTER NAMED EZEKIEL

by Jonathan Larson

In the early going here in Botswana our life has been lived under the sign of a remodelling project. (We're not just sure if it's the house or us that is being remodelled!) Honestly, at last count, there were three different kinds of linoleum tile on the new kitchen floor. And the word last night was that we're looking number four in the eye. One evening we came home to discover that the kitchen cabinets had been hung upside down. The laundry room wall is out of plumb and the sliding door doesn't quite know where to go.

The laundry and kitchen are so far away from the water heater (called a geyser here in Botswana and pronounced "geezer"—as in wild west movies) that it is virtually impossible to coax even tepid water into the dish or laundry sinks.

By now you're asking, "But where's the comic relief in this 'B' grade drama?" Well, that's the question I was asking myself until I met the painter. I'll call him Ezekiel.

I'm not sure what Ezekiel had in his paint can, but all this while, he was going quietly from room to room covering a multitude of sins with his brush. One day I squatted down next to the bucket of paint he was mixing and we began to talk.

In a voice barely above a whisper, Ezekiel sketched out a surprising story. I learned that he is a refugee—one of Africa's five million homeless ones. Ezekiel's home is one of the black townships in neighboring South Africa.

Some years ago, while still in high school there were troubles that brought such places as Soweto to world attention. As a leader in the student community of Christians, he was suspected of collaborating with agitators. Having learned that somewhere in a police file, his name had been entered on a list of undesirables, Ezekiel fled the city, making his way to Swaziland and Mozambique and finally to Botswana.

In the years since his flight from his family and home, Ezekiel has learned that his police file now includes accusations that he has taken military training with the African National Congress and in the Soviet Union. As he tells me this, he shakes his head in bewilderment, and allows himself a brief smile at the absurdity of it all.

Ezekiel has not seen his home for five years. The prospect is that his wait is not nearly over. His family has managed to see him once.

On the weekends Ezekiel is a lay evangelist, and in the evenings he polishes a manuscript he hopes some day to publish.

As I have mused on these things, a kitchen gone awry and a refugee named Ezekiel who spreads a coat of grace with his brush, I have stumbled on a text in Jeremiah, "*The people who survived the sword found grace in the wilderness.*"

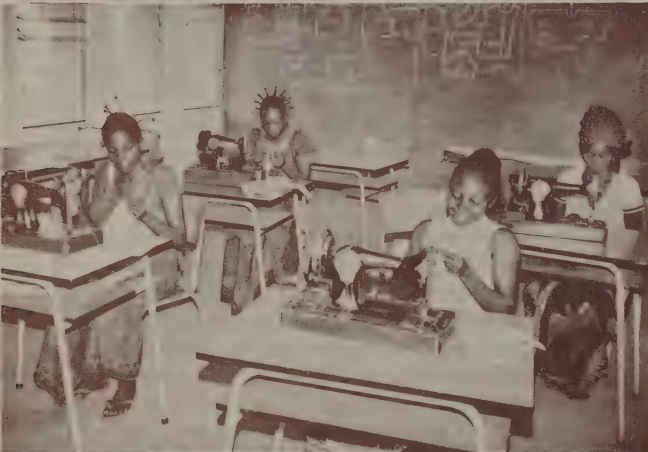
Jeremiah 31:2



Jonathan Larson arrived in Botswana in July 1981. He has served as Religious Programmer for Radio Botswana during Henry Unrau's furlough time. The Larson's will also be relating to African Spiritual Churches under AIMM sponsorship.

# THOUGHTS OF DUSTY PATHS

by Lora Oyer



Thinking of footprints on the dusty paths of Africa brings a flood of memories! In Zaire footprints of children, women and men lead to experiences that are quite different from ours in Western culture. Dusty paths in Kinshasa lined both sides of busy streets in this capital city of about three million people. They were teeming with people. Many women and children were carrying loads of wood or produce on their heads to or from market, often with a baby on the back. Hut after small hut, built directly behind the open sewage ditches, lined the streets through which we were driven to visit four of the Mennonite churches.

Outreach of each of our Mennonite churches includes not only spiritual nurture, but also education and medical assistance. In July, space rented by church members for poorly lighted, tiny classrooms was empty. After their two months winter vacation (July and August) those dirt floors are again packed with children who bring meager supplies and sit crowded together on the floor to learn.

The only way to reach the quiet, open campus of ISTK, the theological school sponsored by five Protestant denominations in which the Mennonite are participating, was through a large, open market. It was crowded with stands and with people.

Footprints on the campus lead us to several of the 100 seminarians studying on the peaceful, grassy slopes just above the market. On another little hill were gathered about fifteen of the wives of seminarians sitting with babies on their laps. They were rehearsing several music selections for the graduation exercises of their husbands the next Saturday.

Oh that you could have seen the tables lined with garments they had made, with hangings and quilts on display for families to see who would gather for graduation. The neat corners of their quilt designs and blocks and small stitches were lovely! With the help of Gladys Buller their fingers had been busy sewing as their husbands were studying. For them life is changing. Yet the work day of the average women in Africa is sixteen long, hard hours.

Let's go inland 500 miles to the bush country of Zaire. On the soft, dry dirt paths of Nyanga many had come to line the fences around the landing strip and to carry our luggage to homes where we would spend the night. Then, gathered at the lovely church for a reception were various choirs: a women's choir sang with their African instruments, a youth choir, a mixed choir, all to welcome us with the international language of music.

▲ From top: Zaire Market; ISTK wives in sewing class; Choral welcome at Nyanga.

After the men of our delegation had been introduced, I was the first of the women. I don't know what Rev. Mukanza said, but a loud applause broke out which must have meant they were pleased that not only men came this time!

The tiny, elderly woman caretaker of the Lycée seemed pleased to unlock several doors of the neat classrooms of the girls' school. Here in Nyanga, high school age girls, who gather from miles around, can attend either regular high school or the Lycée. More girls attend the latter because they feel a greater need to learn more about health, nutrition, child-care and needs of the family for which they will one day be responsible. This slight woman also gladly took us to her field to show us how she digs manioc, spreading her bare feet as she swings and chops with her heavy hoe.

Walking miles on these dusty paths to the river to wash clothes or bathe, to the spring for cooking and drinking water for the family is an energy and time consuming part of the day for girls and women.

Many times along the eighteen-mile drive to the saw-mill, we wondered if our driver would negotiate all the deep ruts in the road without tipping over or get us through the thick, fine dirt. This was a main Zairian road, but it could carry no ordinary car, only the sturdiest of vehicles, and they must have been very few.

Never could I forget their many beautiful ways of helping us feel welcome in their country. The greeting by each church group was special. We ordinary people felt like royalty as they lined our pathway with palms and flowers, sang joyously with the accompaniment of African instruments, waved bright blossoms and branches of palms. Dinner beneath the spreading mango tree with the light of the moon and one light from the generator, or in the homes of the Africans or the missionaries—each was a special experience. I was impressed by the warmth and generosity of our African sisters and brothers. They gave the best they had—their time, their love, themselves!

I was impressed by the commitment, dedication and hope of the missionary team and national leaders, by the relationship among missionaries and nationals, by their music and the joy expressed through it.

From Zaire and various countries of Africa we heard Africans say with confidence—Christ is at work among us. His message is spreading. There is hope.

The mingling of footsteps of persons from Canada, the U.S. and Zaire on the dusty paths of Africa can be symbolic of our unity in Christ. The kingdom of God calls each of us to love, to serve, to share in the spirit of Him who came to bring the abundant life for ALL.



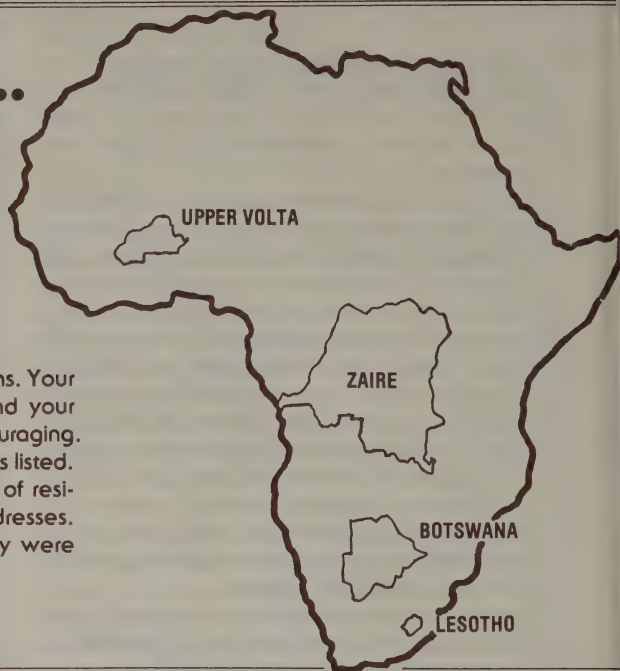
From top: Zaire market; Manioc in various stages of preparation; Elementary students.



# WHERE IN THE WORLD...

## *An AIMM Directory*

AIMM is currently serving in four African nations. Your prayers on behalf of these missionaries and your letters to them will be most helpful and encouraging. They may be contacted through the addresses listed. Please note that in some cases their place of residence may vary from these mailing addresses. "Church centers" in Zaire are what formerly were called "mission stations."



### **Zaire**

All mail may be sent via  
B.P. 4081  
Kinshasa II  
Republic of Zaire

Missionaries are presently located  
at the following places:

Kalonda Church Center  
Mary Epp  
Richard and Jean Hirschler  
John and Mary Pauls  
Dennis and Shirley Ries  
Leona Schrag  
Kamayala Church Center  
Ben and Helen Eidse  
Kananga  
Dennis and Diane Schmidt  
Kinshasa  
Peter and Gladys Buller  
Charles Buller  
Charles Fennig  
John and Leona Krause  
Earl and Ruth Roth  
Nyanga Church Center  
Donna Colbert  
Arnold and Grace Harder  
Tshikapa Church Center  
Herman and Ruth Buller

### **Upper Volta**

B.P. 40  
Orodara, Upper Volta  
Loren and Donna Entz  
Ann Garber  
Gail Wiebe

### **Botswana**

P.O. Box 703  
Gaborone, Botswana  
Jonathan and  
Mary Kay Larson  
Fremont and Sara Regier  
Henry and Naomi Unrau

P.O. Box 469  
Selebi Pikwe, Botswana  
Irvin and Lydia Friesen

P.O. Box 669  
Francistown, Botswana  
Harry and Lois Dyck

Private Bag 24  
Francistown, Botswana  
Ronald Sawatzky

### **Lesotho**

P.O. Box 365  
Maseru, 100, Lesotho  
Virgil and Mary Kay Gerig

P.O. Box 1331  
Maseru, 100, Lesotho  
Jim and Vicki Egli  
Stan and Lorri Nussbaum

P.O. Box 70  
Peka, 340, Lesotho  
John and Tina Bohn

N.U.L.  
Roma, 180, Lesotho  
Titus and Karen Guenther

### **In Language Study**

enroute to Zaire

Jim and Cheryl Campbell  
80 rue des Mèlèzes  
1050 Bruxelles  
Belgium  
Don and Norma Friesen  
473 rue L. Vanderkindere  
1180 Bruxelles  
Belgium

## On Furlough

### From Zaire

Richard and Marilyn Derksen  
354 Canner St., Apt. 612  
New Haven, CT 06511

Levi and Eudene Keidel  
1104 West Wildwood,  
Fort Wayne, IN 46807

Don and Naomi Unruh  
1236 Columbia Circle  
Newton, KS 67114

### From Upper Volta

Dennis and Jeanne Rempel  
446 North Sixth Street  
Upland, CA 91786

## On North American Staff

224 West High Street  
Elkhart, IN 46516

James and Jenny Bertsche  
Art and Martini Janz  
Bob and Joyce Gerhart  
Doreen Ratzlaff

## Retired Missionaries

Workers now retired from the field after 20 or more years of service. There are many others that have been part of the AIMM family who served for shorter periods of time or who are still active in other Christian ministries.

Elmer and Esther Dick  
Route 2, Box 255A  
Mountain Lake, MN 56159

Aganetha Friesen Enns  
Sp. 102, Hawthorne Acres  
310 NE Kings Valley Highway  
Dallas, OR 97338

Archie and Irma Graber  
Route 2  
Stryker, OH 43557

Frieda Guengerich  
6650 W. Butler Drive, Apt. 6  
Glendale, AZ 85302

Anna V. Leichty  
265 Buckeye Street  
Berne, IN 46711

Justina Neufeld  
609 S. Walnut, Box 183  
Inman, KS 67546

Anna Quiring  
209 Ninth St., Box 105  
Mountain Lake, MN 56159

Tina Quiring  
209 Ninth St., Box 105  
Mountain Lake, MN 56159

Glen and Ina Locke  
Route 1, Box 168  
Pekin, IL 61554

Fanny Schmallenberger  
136 North Maple,  
Morton, IL 61550

Russell and Helen Schnell  
6651 W. Alice Ave., Apt. 15  
Glendale, AZ 85302

Lodema Short  
406 Brussel  
Archbold, OH 43502

Merle and Dorothy Schwartz  
811 Osage Street  
Normal, IL 61761

Lois Slagle  
Box 424  
Pioneer, OH 43554

Irena Sprunger  
665 Hendricks  
Berne, IN 46711



## In Your Praying...

*Pray for the missionary children, some living at home, others needing to be away from home to attend school, some doing their schooling by correspondence. Pray for those who substitute for their parents when they are away at school.*

Africa Inter-Mennonite Mission  
224 West High Street  
Elkhart, Indiana 46516



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MENNONITE HISTORICAL LIBRARY  
GOSHEN COLLEGE

GOSHEN IN 46526

# EDITORIAL

## NOT MY SHOES, LORD!

Have you heard the contemporary song, *Moses*, by Ken Medema? It brings to life the debate Moses had with God at the burning bush. To throw down his rod was so difficult for Moses. Even more ridiculous was God telling him to pick up the resultant snake by the tail. As the song so movingly describes it, Moses pleads, "Lord, You have not lived here very long; Lord, You've got the whole thing wrong. Don't You know that you never pick up a hissing snake by his . . . ."\*

And the Lord interrupts with, "Pick it up Moses."

In reflecting on this call to obedience and trust, another dimension of the account in Exodus 3 impressed me. God told Moses to take off his shoes, his sandals. Have you considered the implications of that?

Yes, I know, the reason given is that God's presence in the burning bush changed that patch of wilderness into holy ground. But think what that meant to Moses. It was an edge of desert place, mountainous terrain where the protection of one's feet is essential to survival. The small cactus, cruel thorns, or concealed scorpions could cripple the strongest man who steps on them with bare feet. The coarse rock outcrops and superheated sand may be tolerated by playing boys for a while but would soon incapacitate an older man.

Certainly one would expect to take off one's shoes to enter the tent of a chief or the palace of a king, but this was not a carpeted sanctuary or polished floors of marble. This is the backside of the desert and God expects Moses to take off his sandals? What a risk! It's crazy! You don't take off your shoes in this rough land! How helpless, how vulnerable this will make Moses. He won't be able to run. His travel will be restricted. If an emergency develops, how limited he will be.

"Not my shoes, Lord. I need them. I depend on them."

But God was testing Moses. It was holy ground. "This is different," God says, "You are on my territory. Protection, strength, ability, usefulness, these are not found in your shoes, but in My power, in My words, in My promises."

God repeated the lesson with Joshua. Just before confronting the walled citadel of Jericho, Joshua met God in the person of the Captain of the Lord's hosts. Joshua had been reflecting on his resources, reviewing his strategy when the Lord asks him to risk being weak by taking off his shoes.

As we live in obedience to the Great Commission we are entering God's program, territory of His Kingdom. We come prepared with our education, experience and expertise. But there will be the moments of testing when God says, "Take off your shoes. Can you trust Me when you feel helpless? Are you willing to obey if you don't have total control of a situation? Are you truly convinced that I can protect your steps from cactus and crevasse, thorn and thistle, even if I ask you to slip out of your favorite shoes?"

— RWG

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*In Tshikapa, Zaire*



# MESSENGER

Volume XLIX, No. 4 Summer 1982

Africa Inter-Mennonite Mission, Inc.

## in this issue —

*We give thanks for the lives and memories of two of God's servants. One, Kabangu Tom, lived in Africa. The other, Mrs. C.E. Rediger, lived in America. Their lives were contrasts of experiences and environments but their common faith and devotion to the cause of Christ linked them to all of us and to AIMM for more than half a century.*

Page 3: Big Tom Will Be Missed by James Bertsche  
 Page 7: Whose Work Is It? by Milo Nussbaum  
 Page 8: Mrs. C.E. Rediger: Pioneer and Partner in Mission  
 Page 10: 70th Anniversary Collage  
 Page 12: Operation Foxtire from AE News  
 Page 13: Psalm of Life by Mary Epp  
 Page 14: God's Nudgings by Anne Garber  
 Page 15: Finding the Door by Gail Wiebe  
 Page 15: Going Back  
 Back Page: Editorial—Silly Lamp

## the cover —

*For some, happiness is a warm puppy. For others it may be a pet monkey, even when the monkey's not so sure of the idea. Tshikapa, Zaire*

*Photo by Bob Gerhart*

Unless otherwise noted articles, photos, and artwork are written or prepared by AIMM Communications



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# BIG TOM WILL BE MISSED



Big Tom

Big Tom is gone. His friendly smile and energetic manner are here no longer. But his impact lives on.

The Zaire Church may be considered young but already it has its roster of pioneers, remembered for their faithful and effective ministries. African evangelists and pastors have played a major role in planting and extending the Zaire Mennonite Church. One such was Kabangu Thomas who across the years came to be known simply as Pastor Tom. Among the missionaries he was often affectionately referred to as "Big Tom."

Tom was big! His 6'2" frame was broad shouldered and well built. He had a life-long problem finding shoes large enough for his huge feet. But his most striking features were his warm, outgoing manner and his quick, flashing smile. Wherever he lived throughout his long pastoral career he became quickly known in the surrounding area.

Pastor Tom grew up as a child in the Djoko Punda area, the Charlesville of earlier days. Here he received his primary school education and his first training in Bible. As a young student it soon became apparent that He had a gift for preaching. His energetic style with a gift for drawing illustrations and objects from African life were very effective before the village audiences. Already as a young man he was instrumental in bringing many Africans to faith in Christ.

Early in his time at Djoko Punda, Kabangu Tom became closely involved in ministry with an older Christian leader, Pastor Kazadi Matthew. During their time together Pastor Tom became his understudy and co-laborer. He eventually replaced Pastor Kazadi as pastor in a church center at the river port of Basongo to the north of Djoko Punda.

In the early Fifties when missionary Archie Graber began to develop a new mission station at Kalonda near the city of Tshikapa, he requested the Zaire church to transfer Pastor Tom from the north to the Kalonda-Tshikapa center. Pastor Tom and his wife, Eyebea, responded with vigor and enthusiasm. This was at a time when the Belgian colonial regime was still in control. The privileged Catholic missionaries in the city of Tshikapa did not view the newly arrived Protestants with favor. They exerted all possible pressure to prevent this new installation. However, persistence won the day and building began on a sloping hillside overlooking the Kasai, seven kilometers downstream from Tshikapa proper. But the early going was not easy.

*continued on next page*



*The Rev. Kabangu Thomas Lubadi and his wife, Tshikudi Eyeba*



*After services, Tshikapa church*

Tshikapa is the major center of the diamond rich area of the southern Kasai river basin. It became the supply point and hub of administration and operation of the mining industry. The Belgian Mining Company did not permit Protestant meetings or schools in the camps they provided (and controlled) for their workers. Consequently, worship services had to be held under the mango trees along the main road, out of sight of the camp buildings. But Pastor Tom was as determined as he was affable. Often turned away from the offices and gateways of the mine compound, he kept coming back. As he became better known and his circle of acquaintances and friends broadened he began to "crack" the system. Gradually he gained entry into the large company camps and hospital. When the time finally came that the mission was granted a plot of ground in one of the camps, Big Tom was the first resident pastor.

By this time it became apparent that Pastor Thomas and his beloved wife, Eyeba, would likely have no children. They had been married a number of years already. In African culture this is a very serious and troublesome problem. The continuation of one's clan into the next generation is all important. With increasing regularity fellow clan members came to counsel and pressure Pastor Thomas to either set Eyeba aside for another wife or, at least, to take a second wife that could provide an heir. But Pastor Tom stood firm on both counts. The matter of children was in God's hands, he said. If God granted them their desire they would rejoice greatly. But if not, they would accept the disappointment. The marriage vows they had made to each other would be kept faithfully.

Tom and Eyeba never did have children of their own. As for spiritual children, they are beyond numbering.

*Taller than all, Kabangu Tom in the first class of the Bible Institute at Kalonda, (1954)*

*Faculty, from left, Fanny Schmallenberger, Allan Wiebe, and Waldo Harder*





*Bicycle evangelism*

During their residence at Tshikapa they experienced some of the greatest testing in their lives and ministry. Pastor Tom enjoyed hunting. Through contacts with the local Belgian officials, whose grudging respect he had by this time won, he was able to secure a 12 gauge shotgun, something very exceptional at that time. He prized it highly, and as he found time, he would slip down into the bush along the river late in the afternoon to shoot guinea fowl or monkeys for Eyeba's cooking pot. In 1960 when the Belgians hastily granted political autonomy to the Congo and then withdrew, smoldering conflicts between the tribes of the Lulua and Baluba flared into open strife along the Kasai River. Pastor Tom, of the Baluba tribe, was quickly confronted by a delegation of his fellow Baluba. Warfare and bloodshed had broken out. They were seeking by all means to arm themselves for the conflict erupting around them. They needed Tom's gun to carry into battle.

But Tom had foreseen what was coming and had hidden his shotgun. No amount of menacing or threats on the part of his fellow clansmen moved him. His gun would not be carried into battle against his Lulua friends. He had ministered to many of them during his years at Tshikapa.

Pastor Thomas said, "I told them it was not my affair to fight against flesh and blood, but against principalities and the powers of darkness. They did not like this. I told them I would not cause the blood of other people to drain onto the ground. They were very angry and insistent. I told them I was their pastor and my work was to save souls of people. How could I have a part in destroying their bodies?"

Tense days followed. Some mornings they awoke to find symbols painted on their front door or traced in the sand of their courtyard. These conveyed the message: "You are marked for death." Bitter accusations of betrayal were launched against him and his wife. But Pastor Tom stood firm. No matter what happened, he would be no partner to bloodshed.

Afterwards, Kabangu Thomas reflected, "When the fighting was finished we found our word now was much stronger. People had greater respect for us. They respect me as a man of God."

Referring to a fellow pastor who chose to go along with his tribemates into the conflict, Pastor Tom said, "The desires of his tribemates overwhelmed him, and he went with them to war. Now that it is over, they don't look up to him as one above them in the affairs of God. They count him the same as anybody else. I scolded him. I said, 'Why did you ruin your many years of work for God over a worthless matter as this? They don't listen to your word any longer. They count you as a worthless thing because you let yourself become like all of them.' Now his work for God does not have power."

Big Tom continued, "How can a Christian ever be strong again when he had a part in draining the life-blood of others onto the ground? When I kill somebody I take the place of God and say, 'Today your life ends. Today your soul must enter eternity.' Afterward I can weep tears of sorrow before God, and He will forgive me. But how can my tears ever change the place that souls went to? I could never make a recompense for my sin. I could never after be the same. I could never forget.

"Today I have much joy going to villages everywhere to preach the Gospel and talk to people about their souls. I preach with much happiness and power, because I did not let them use my gun. I know my hands are clean of human blood."

It was not all happiness after the initial conflicts. The Baluba tribal leaders finally made the decision to migrate eastward to the land of their forefathers. Pastor Tom and Eyeba were caught up in the massive evacuation. Arriving in the bush country of East Kasai with almost no material goods, they shared the hunger, privation and suffering of their fellow clansmen. But wherever they were, Pastor Tom became a rallying point for fellow Christians. At first under trees, then in simple grass thatched shelters, they met for worship, prayer, and sustenance from the Word of God, in the midst of their acute need.

*continued on next page*



**Kabangu Thomas in General Assembly meetings at Banga**

Eventually Pastor Tom and Eyeba located in a growing rural center called Kabeya Kamuanga. It wasn't long until the foundations for a large chapel were dug and, under Tom's leadership and challenge, rock was being carried up from the stream below the hill. Today one of the largest permanent chapels in that area stands at Kabeya Kamuanga.

In his later years Pastor Tom was called often to hold meetings in different regional centers of the Mennonite Church. For several years he served as a regional evangelist.



**Making Christ known**

It was about two years ago that friends noticed that Big Tom was losing weight and that his energy seemed to be dwindling. A trip to the hospital for a check up revealed that he was suffering from cancer. It was this affliction which took his life in January 1982.

Pastor Tom's passing leaves a big gap. His tall frame, generous smile and warm handshake will be missed. His guitar and singing voice will be missed. His energetic interventions in church conferences will be missed. His influence and emphasis upon outreach and evangelism will be missed. His impassioned appeals for repentance and faith in Christ from Zaire chapel platforms will be missed.

Kabangu Thomas Lubadi served his Church and His Lord with unwavering commitment. Big Tom has gone on to meet the One he served so resolutely and loved so well. We rejoice with him. We thank God for him. And we remember in our prayers Eyeba, his faithful companion of so many years.

— James Bertsche.



quotes by Pastor Thomas are from an interview conducted by Levi Keidel and published in the Congo Missionary Messenger, April-June, 1963



**Kabangu Lubadi in Mbuji Mayi, January 1981**

# WHO'S WORK IS IT?



*When a missionary goes to Zaire, Botswana, Lesotho or Upper Volta, who's work is he going to do? Is it his work? Is it the work of the mission board? Is it the work of the conference? Or is it the work of the church? Who is finally responsible for the work of world evangelization? Who will be rewarded for doing the job? And who will be called to give an account if the job isn't done? If it is the missionary's work we can watch and criticise and wait until he fails. If it is the board's work we can disagree with their methods or their priorities or their personnel or their places of work and feel justified in not helping. If it is the work of the conference we can readily say that we will just see what they can do. But if it is the work of the church, and I am a member of the church, then it is another story.*

**There is something drastically wrong when a missionary needs to persuade the church about its God-given work.**

*The Lord commands the church to pray for more workers, Mt. 9:38, to send missionaries, Acts 13:1-3, and to make disciples of all nations, Mt. 28:16-20. If we fail to pray for more workers we are disobedient and probably indicate by that failure that we are not interested in helping to send or support more workers. If we fail to send missionaries, we are in a very real sense contradicting God both about his calling and his priorities. If we fail to make disciples where we are it indicates that we aren't very interested in making disciples anywhere.*

*There is something drastically wrong when a missionary needs to persuade the church about its God-given work. Instead, the church should constantly be persuading some of its members to become missionaries. Neither should the church or any member of the church feel any need to be thanked when help has been given to a missionary to do the work assigned to the church.*

*If we don't accept the three-pronged assignment from the Lord, then we can readily complain because the missionary costs too much, and the board is always asking for more money. Some people treat requests from our own mission boards as if they came from some greedy foreigners who want more money for themselves.*

**Missionary work is the work of the church.**

*Unless we clearly understand whose work it is, we will not be involved as we should be, and unless we believe that the Lord has given the work to the church we will not pray nor give according to his will. Giving to missions seems to be done for many lesser reasons. If it is done primarily because one knows a missionary or feels obligated to help a friend or because there is hope for some praise or recognition for that giving, it is certainly misguided and will go without any reward from the Lord. The real motive for participating in a missionary ministry is the will of God. One is under as much obligation to give for missions if he is not acquainted with any missionary as he is if he knows many on a personal basis.*

*Missionary work is the work of the church. We are the church! It is our work! We, together, are responsible for taking the gospel to all nations. Our problems with recruitment and support will plague us until the church accepts wholeheartedly its assignment from the Lord. The church must assume and exercise the proper initiative rather than wait any longer for someone else to do its work.*

—Milo Nussbaum

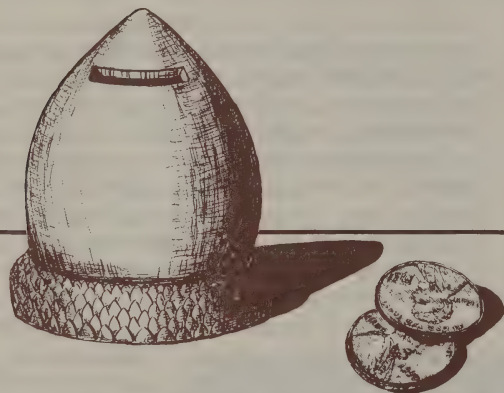


Milo Nussbaum, pastor of the Grace Evangelical Mennonite Church, Morton, IL, is a former member of the AIMM Board.



It must have been a beautiful reunion! After thirteen years they are again together, but now able to look on the face of their Savior and Lord. On April 10, 1982 Bena Mae Rediger left her mortal body and entered her heavenly home nearly thirteen years after her beloved husband, Christian. For six decades they had served together. For a large portion of that time their lives were deeply entwined with world missions. For twenty-one years they were directly involved with the Africa Inter-Mennonite Mission when it was still called the Congo Inland Mission (CIM).

## MRS. C.E. REDIGER: Pioneer and Partner In Mission



A penny saved was more than a penny earned! Put into the little CIM bank that penny, along with many other pennies, could bring Good News to boys and girls of the Congo. Such was the vision of Mrs. Christian E. Rediger and effective promotion of that concept put many Missionary Banks on the tables of Central Conference and Evangelical Mennonite Church homes during the Thirties and Forties. These banks, called Missionary Barrels or Jugs, were important tools of stewardship in the lives of many young persons as a penny per meal was dropped in for use in Africa by the Congo Inland Mission.

Mrs. Rediger influenced many lives of young and old during her years of ministry along side her husband. Though not listed as such in the masthead, Mrs. Rediger was actually the Associate Editor of the Congo Missionary Messenger, now the AIMM Messenger. She introduced the Children's Page in 1937 and the Minute Meditations in 1938. These terse jottings gleaned from many sources are still gems of wisdom worth reflecting upon in today's changing society.

Bena Mae Oyer was born March 9, 1888 near Grove-land, Illinois. On May 11, 1908 she married Christian E. Rediger of Flanagan, IL and became a faithful and strengthening companion for the next 61 years. There were numerous changes and moves as the Redigers served together in a multi-faceted ministry. Their Christian work began in 1914 at the Salem Children's Home near Gridley. A call to the pastoral ministry took them to the Evangelical Mennonite Church in Bluffton, Ohio. During those years Rev. Rediger took studies at Bluffton College and Witmarsum Seminary.

In 1924 the Redigers moved to Marion, Indiana to work as Bookkeeper, Bursar, and later, Registrar at Marion College. Here Rev. Rediger earned his Bachelor's and Master's degrees. 1932 saw a move to Chicago where Rev. Rediger pastored the Southwest Gospel Tabernacle, now Calvary Memorial EMC. After two years the Rediger's son-in-law, the Rev. I.R. Calhoun assumed that pastorate when the Redigers moved back to Bluffton and the responsibilities of the Business Office of Bluffton College.

Rev. Rediger had already served on the Board of the Congo Inland Mission for five years, 1928 to 1933. In 1936 the Board turned to him for leadership after the retirement of the Rev. A.M. Eash. So another move back to Chicago and thus began a sixteen year period at the helm of the Congo Inland Mission that would be characterized by expansion and unity. The title was that of Secretary-Treasurer, the equivalent of Executive Secretary today. For twelve of those sixteen years the CIM office was simply space in the corner of their home. An indication of the tightness of the budget is seen in an action by the Board allowing the chief executive officer the privilege of spending up to \$10 per month for clerical help.



**Bena Mae Rediger**

It was during these years that Mrs. Rediger had a very special role in the life of both Mission and missionaries. Bena Mae Rediger frequently traveled with her husband. She was a good and forceful speaker in her own right and often provided Rev. Rediger with outlines and materials for his speaking engagements. She was an effective teacher, always well prepared for classes and able to confront her students with the realities of the world on the one hand and the claims of Scripture on the other.

These were lean years financially for CIM, as well as war years for part of the time. Mrs. Rediger's introduction of the use of missionary banks was symbolic of the giving she encouraged by her own life as well as her words. As a gracious hostess she strengthened friendships with travelling missionaries and CIM constituency. As a neat housekeeper she had a creative way with the mementoes of their travels. She became mother to many CIM missionaries whom she counseled and prayed with during furlough days.

Mrs. C. E. Rediger is acknowledged as instrumental in the founding of the Women's Auxiliaries in both the Evangelical Mennonite Church and the former Central Conference churches. From these groups came material aid, personalized interest in missionaries, financial support and, most important, ministry through the prayer bands that were formed. Many rolled bandages, baby layettes, medical or hygienic supplies and various sewing projects found their way to the Congo through her devotion and inspiration.

The work of Christ in what is now called Zaire is certainly indebted to Mrs. Rediger, helpmeet, companion, and faithful servant. Retirement from the Congo Inland Mission office was not the end for the Redigers when the transition to Mr. Harve Driver's leadership was completed in 1952. Rev. and Mrs. Rediger moved again, to Wheaton this time, working for several years on the Business Office staff of Wheaton College. Then followed a time as Office Manager for the American Leprosy Mission in Chicago. Even after the move to Normal, Illinois in 1957, part-time work in the business office of the Mennonite Hospital of Bloomington made retirement only "semi."

Shortly before observing their sixty-first wedding anniversary, Christian E. Rediger went to be with his Lord, April 24, 1969, after a full life that touched many persons and places. Mrs. Rediger continued her pilgrimage alone for another thirteen years, the last part of which was spent as a resident of the Mennonite Home in Meadows, Illinois. Her ninety-four years took her beyond most of the friends of her early years, but for thousands scattered across this continent and that of Africa, her influence continues in what she launched, encouraged and strengthened by devoted service and faithful prayer.



— compiled by Bob Gerhart with Jim Bertsche

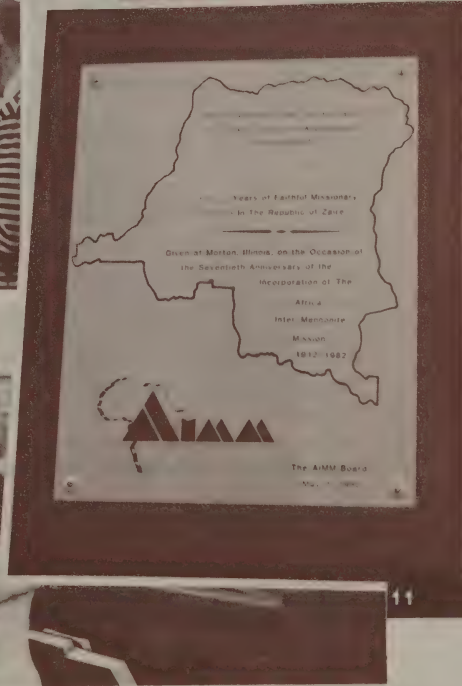
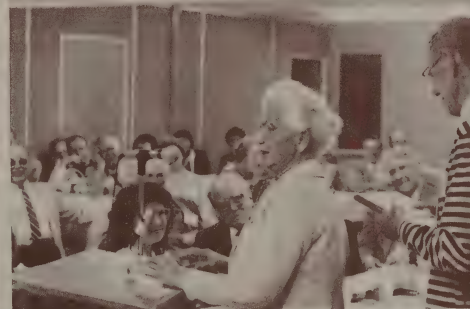


*1912-1982  
and Still Serving*

Left to Right from top:  
North Danvers Church; Rachel Yoder; Leona & Sam  
Entz; Allan Wiebe; Jim Juhnke, Jim Bertsche & Doreen  
Ratzlaff; Dan Petersen; Cornie Lowen; Peter Sawatzky,  
Jim Juhnke, Maurice Stahly; Elmer Dick; Jenny Bertsche,  
Irma & Archie Graber; Fanny Schmallenberger; Mission-  
aries past & present.

Opposite page:  
Left to Right from top:  
Russell & Helen Schnell; Peter Barkman; Art & Martini  
Janz; R.L. Hartzler, Jenny & Jim Bertsche, Reuben  
Short; Carlock Church; Aggie Friesen Enns; Dorothy &  
Merle Schwartz; Anniversary Plaque; Harv Driver; Mrs.  
Anna Stahly, age 94, at Anniversary service.





## 70th Anniversary Collage



May 1 & 2, 1982

SUMMER 1982

# OPERATION FOX-FIRE

The Africa Enterprise Zimbabwe Team has a vision of doing what Jesus did in going into every city and village, both preaching and manifesting the Kingdom of God.

It's called "Operation Fox-Fire" because they want to set Zimbabwe on fire for the Lord Jesus. The name is based on the story of Samson (Judges 15) when the Spirit of the Lord came on him and he caught 300 foxes, paired them, tied their tails together and put a torch in there. When he set them free they ran into the enemy's harvest and set it on fire.

Zimbabwe has suffered through the years of bitter and deadly guerrilla warfare. After independence was won, the guerrillas began coming back into certain areas and encampments. Some despise the Gospel and are teaching Marxism to the villagers. People sit up the whole night rehearsing these Marxist slogans. To go to them with a Bible was dangerous.

Along with this attitude there is a strong movement in high places for the Church to return to spirit-worship. Influential people are saying that Christianity needs to be tailored to fit African tribal religion.

Into this problem fraught situation, the Africa Enterprise Team have sent out twelve trained young people. Knowing very well that they would go to preach in tough areas, with a Bible and no gun, they said, "Never mind. We will go for Jesus."

Fox-fire candidates were given two weeks of intensive training. Each went to an assigned area to stay for two months, then came back for one week of rest and one week of further training before going out again. Accompanying each was a letter to officials explaining who they were, where they were going to preach and for how long. They also had letters of recommendation from the heads of various denominations. Each one also had the prayer cover of a committed prayer partner who prayed for him particularly and constantly.

Foxes and Vixens, as they are called, were given \$30 each to start with to cover bus fare, food and all incidentals. They were to step out in faith, trusting God that they would be supported by the local people to whom they went.

What Happened?

Two were promptly robbed of everything they had, money and knapsacks.

Several times foxes have gone without food for two or three days, have gone on their knees and discovered what Jesus could do for them. Two were walking down a road one day, hungry, when they met a man who asked them what they were doing. They said they were young evangelists. He asked how they were looking after themselves, and they told him, and he gave them a 10 kg (22 lb) bag of maize meal.

So far bodily injury to the foxes has been minimal, though there have been threats, and a number of the foxes have said they are ready to die for the Lord.

The very boldness and persistence of the foxes has opened the way in some places. Entering a guerrilla camp, they get asked,

"Who sent you here? Was it the South African government?"

"No. We have been sent by believers who are black just like you."

"What do you mean bringing Jesus here when we have our new slogans that come to our country?"

"Well, you go about your business teaching your slogans, we also have our business to do and we have to preach."

"Go bring your sponsors."

"No, that would make us too late. Someone might die in the meantime. This is urgent."

"What really is behind this?"

"The real thing behind it is the souls of men — that if you die today you might know you are going to Heaven, because I know you don't know where you are going."

"Give us your names."

"Yes, fine. But no matter what, the Word has to be preached."



Going into one forbidden guerrilla area, two foxes encountered a girl who was mad. They laid their hands on her and she ran away into the bush.

They tried to preach, but were told that no strangers were permitted here, and no preaching, and they were roughly forced to leave on a bus.

When the girl who had been prayed for came out of the bush she was totally healed and went home to her parents. Her parents and all the villagers were excited, and naturally word got around pretty fast. So the adults got together the people who were sick and went to the local commander and said, "These are sick people. Pray for them."

He said, "I can't do that."

The spokesman said, "I know. But the people who prayed for this girl of ours and healed her you have driven away out of the area. Now get them back!"

So word was sent after the foxes that they were allowed to come back. That was in Mondoro Tribal Trust Lands, a difficult place.

Chris Sewell, the leader of the Africa Enterprise Team in Zimbabwe, says, "We see this as a power struggle between the Holy Spirit and the Kingdom of Satan. And the one is being raised up against the other. The Lord has been teaching Christians here how to wage a spiritual warfare. We teach the young people who go out to come behind the government and local officers, whether they like them or not, and to pray for them by name: "Lord, change his heart." The heart is the focal point of our prayers. In the early prayer meetings in Salisbury before the elections, we learned to pray, "Lord, change all our hearts." And He did.

— from the A. E. Witness



**Africa Enterprise** is an inter-denominational organization based in East and Southern Africa. AE's many faceted ministries mobilize churches and persons in evangelism and discipleship across cultural and ethnic boundaries. Under leadership of men like Festo Kivengere and founder Michael Cassidy, AE has a significant role in God's working in Africa. For two decades they have had a special emphasis on penetrating urban areas and reaching key leadership with the Gospel. AIMM personnel have cooperated with AE especially in Lesotho.



Oh Lord, my God, as I lean my arms awhile  
upon the window-sill of heaven;  
I gaze upon Your face and find  
Such grace and truth and strength.  
I know I need not be afraid  
Whatever betide  
For He who gave His only Son  
To save me from my sin,  
Will surely lead my foot aright  
And bring me safely home.  
I see my friends go marching by,  
Each one intent upon his way,  
Some seeking to be led by You  
While others go astray.  
But on each and everyone Your eye  
Is bent with tender care.  
In faith my head bows at Your feet  
You'll do Your best for them.

— Mary Epp

Anne Garber and Gail Wiebe arrived in Upper Volta April 30, 1982. They will form the first of several linguistic teams designed to open the door for Bible translation and ministries in the vernacular languages among tribal peoples whose languages are still unwritten.

Here they share their testimonies of  
God's leading in their lives.

## GOD'S NUDGINGS

Anne Garber



God has called me, nudged, pulled and encouraged me to follow Him for life. Through the years He has led me step by step to serve Him in West Africa. How did that happen? Did I have that longing desire ever since I was ten? No way! I was afraid even to mention the name of God. Did the Lord burden my heart as a young Christian teenager through some missionary talk? No, my memories of missionaries are all too vague, and what they said, even more vague. Besides, I was doubting my own Christianity at the time, let alone talking about it with others.

Yet even at that age God had already begun to prepare me for missionary service. Through my childhood experience with Canadian Indians was born a desire to bridge cultural gaps by speaking the language of those other people. Later, as it became evident that I could do well in high school language courses, I dreamed of someday becoming a bridge of understanding between two different cultures.

With this in mind I landed in Quebec for my first year of college. You must understand that I was not really thinking about God's will for my life. I just did it because of my desire to learn French thoroughly. Yet God had a plan that I was to learn about later.

In Quebec I had my first encounter with Christians who had a true mission spirit. Tilman and Janet Martin and their family cared for others because of the love of Christ. Seeing this, my faith in the existence of God and, subsequently, His love regained its strength. A year later an encounter with a Muslim was a challenge to my belief in the divinity of Jesus.

However, God didn't allow me to linger on those doubts long. He sent me to Zaire! Not that I really intended to; what I had hoped to do was to go on summer Voluntary Service to South America, but John Sommer, Personnel Secretary of COM just didn't want to see all this French fluency go to waste. He suggested Zaire! After several months of struggling and praying I submitted myself to the will of the Lord.

My year in Zaire was a period of spiritual growth as I mingled with missionaries truly committed to the Lord. I came back to Canada with the desire to reach out to non-Christians on the university campus. In addition I caught that African bug: I wanted to go back to Africa! On the basis of this experience I altered my academic goals from French-English translation to general linguistics.

However, it wasn't until my senior year in University in Ottawa that I realized that perhaps God wanted me to commit my life to work in Africa. This happened when James Bertsche of AIMM mentioned the need of linguistic analysis in Upper Volta. When I read his letter my indecisiveness about my future dissolved. It was as if this was what I always wanted to do without really knowing it. Now I knew. With this assurance I dropped my Russian and Spanish courses and picked up two more linguistic courses. I even sold most of my Russian language books and I *never* sell books! To travel in the Soviet Union had been a long time dream, but I felt God was asking me to put that behind.

Eventually I applied to and was accepted by the Graduate School of Linguistics at the University of Illinois at Champaign-Urbana where I could pursue a specialization in African linguistics. The three years at Urbana have been a time of multi-faceted growth. I now have an idea of how much there is to learn about African languages. God also was shaping and molding me into one more like His Son, Jesus.

There were times when I was tempted to go off in a different direction and times when I doubted God's call. But God always pulled me back. When finances were crucial to my continuing education, I again submitted myself to the Lord, ready to change directions if He wanted. The needed jobs always came through.

When there was doubt about my vision to serve the Senufo people of Upper Volta, a job with Anita Glaze, an Art History professor specializing in Senufo art, dropped into my lap. At the same time a Senufo student from the Ivory Coast arrived on campus and I was able to spend several hours a week with him in order to learn about his language. For me this was God confirming that He still wanted me to keep my vision for these people of Upper Volta.

My life is a witness to the fact that God cares for us and guides us even before we are aware of His sovereignty or the need to follow Him in all ways. How much more will He guide me as I seek to do His will!

# FINDING THE DOOR

Gail Wiebe



How was the Lord going to provide an opportunity to do linguistic work with a Mennonite organization? I had a calmness that He had something planned for me but I also realized such opportunities are scarce.

Since I was about twelve years old I had thought missions was the life I was made for. My interest was spurred by the emphasis on missions in my home church. Through high school and college I took courses and met people that kept my interests alive.

My first dip into linguistics was a summer school course after my sophomore year at Bethel College and I found language was still as interesting as it had been when diagramming sentences in high school. In my senior year at Bethel I was part of an "English As A Second Language" program in which I did student teaching at *Academia Menonita* in San Juan, Puerto Rico, for six months.

After college I looked for a cross-cultural experience. I spent three wonderful years at the Hopi Mission School in Oraibi, Arizona. There I taught the Fifth and Sixth grades and had the privilege of gaining some knowledge and experience in a rich culture.

My chance to pursue linguistics came after that Voluntary Service. I spent two semesters at Wycliffe Bible Translator's Summer Institute of Linguistics at Dallas, Texas, and a third session at Norman, Oklahoma.

It was at this point, still not having heard of any openings in linguistics with a Mennonite Mission, that I got a job in Whitewater, Kansas, desiring to spend time in my home community, and to pay off some school debts.

While there I got a letter from Loren Entz asking if I would "be at all interested" in applying for a linguistic assignment with AIMM in Upper Volta. I certainly was interested, and since then the Lord kept the possibility open, confirming plans and giving peace.

Last summer I took a beginning course in French and was able to spend some time with my co-worker, Anne Garber. Seven months of French language study at Le Chambon, France, preceded arrival in Upper Volta in the Spring of 1982. It's a privilege to have this opportunity to serve the Lord and His church.

## GOING BACK . . .

**Anna V. Leichty** of the First Mennonite Church, Berne, Indiana, stepped out of retirement and returned to Zaire, May 26, for a one year special assignment in the Bible Institute at Kalonda. She will fill the vacancy on staff created by the furlough of Mary Epp during the '82-'83 school year.



After a six year absence, **Marjorie Neuenschwander** returns to Tshikaji, Zaire on July 28. A member of the Brookside EMC Church in Fort Wayne, Marjorie is a graduate of Fort Wayne's Lutheran Hospital and Indiana University. She will be an Instructor in Nursing at the hospital and nurses training center at Tshijaji, near the larger city of Kananga, the same location where she worked 1973 to 1976.



**Henry and Tina Dirks** are also returning to Zaire after six years in North America. They will work with a joint Mennonite and Presbyterian project in Kananga where Henry will use his skills in printing and publishing. Their youngest son, **Joel**, 14, is accompanying them. The Dirks' are from Virgil, Manitoba and are members of the Bethany Mennonite Church there. They previously worked in Zaire from 1963 to 1976.



**Rick and Marilyn Derksen** returned to Zaire after an extended furlough and study leave of two years. While living in New Haven, CT, Marilyn earned her Master's Degree with a major in Midwifery at Yale while Rick received a Masters in African

and Biblical studies. Assignments for their second term in Africa include TEE and teaching responsibilities for Rick and training women in midwifery for Marilyn while based in Kalonda.

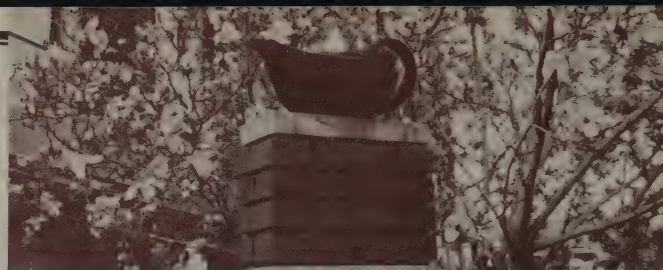


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# EDITORIAL

## Silly Lamp!



"This little light of mine, How long will I let it shine?"

With a chuckle I pass the monument in front of the Elkhart city municipal building on the same block as our AIMM office. It is a memorial topped by one of those teapot-shaped lamps like Florence Nightingale carried or Alladin rubbed. A handle on one end, a spout on the other, with the middle section of the pot holding the oil supply, it is similar to the lamps of the ten virgins going to meet the wedding party in Jesus' parable. These are what we were supposed to have in mind when we sang, "Give me oil in my lamp, Keep me burning."

Back to the chuckle-inspiring monument. It seems that when some well-meaning electrician was wiring the lamp for the electric bulb that represented the flame, he did not quite understand oil lamps. Instead of placing the flame-shaped bulb at the spout end of the lamp where the wick should be, he put it where the lid of the oil reservoir is located, right in the middle of the lamp!

Actually, the middle of the lamp is the most prominent place, is it not? Right in the center of things! But it is not where one lights an oil lamp. A flame there will burn vigorously it is true, but only for a short while before going out in a smelly cloud of smoke. The lamp was not designed for a roaring fire in the fuel supply.

But as I smile at the misplaced flame on the oil lamp I am prompted to ask, "Is this what North American churches are doing?" We are to be vessels containing the oil of the Spirit as a light in a darkened world. But so much of our energy, our oil, is being consumed in a wasteful manner, not in the front of things, but in the middle of the reservoir. Someone has taken the lid off the lamp, shifted the wick, and lit the lamp in the wrong place. While we may bask in the dazzling light, it will be short-lived as we use the supply that was intended to penetrate the darkness.

An oil lamp properly trimmed will burn for a long time, giving quite adequate light where needed. With a handle it is obvious the lamp was meant to be carried along, to be on the move. To set the reservoir ablaze not only shortens the life of the lamp but also limits its portability since you cannot carry a lamp with a hot handle. What a waste of oil and energy to set a lamp aflame at the wrong end! What a silly mistake for an electrician wiring a monument, not understanding oil lamps!

But it is no sillier, and a lot less serious, than the church using all its resources for itself right here in the reservoir of our spiritual abundance and heritage. Can it be that vast reserves of tools and training, books and budgets, are going up quickly in a flash of smoky flame while the arm seeking to hold forth a light out in the front is left without supply?

Such a funny lamp. Such a sad mistake.

—RWG



*Partnership continuing in the eighth decade . . .*



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#### ADMINISTRATIVE STAFF:

Executive Secretary:  
James Bertsche  
Associate Executive Secretary:  
Art Janz  
Coordinator of Communications:  
Bob Gerhart  
Women's Auxiliary:  
Jenny Bertsche  
Martin Janz  
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AIMM IS A MEMBER OF THE COUNCIL OF INTERNATIONAL MISSIONS (CIM) AND THE EVANGELICAL FOREIGN MISSIONS ASSOCIATION (EFMA)



Dr. William B. Sheppard, b. 1865, pioneer Presbyterian missionary in Congo, 1890-1910, was significant person in directing Mennonite interest to Kasai region.

## AT THE BEGINNING

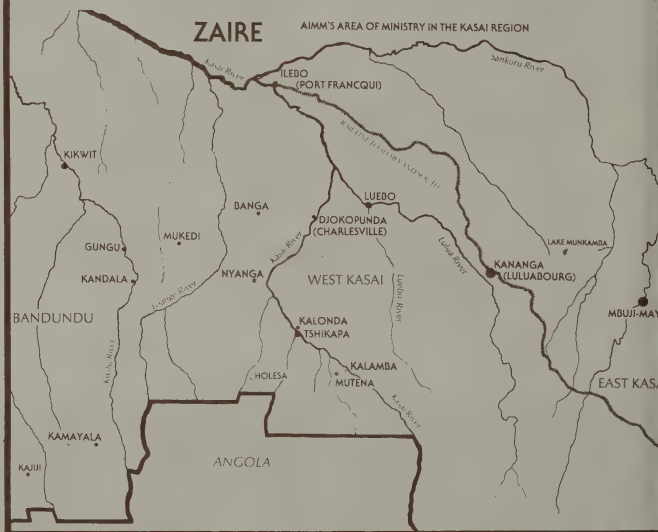
**A**T THE BEGINNING all was questions and ponderings and trust. In central Illinois persons gathered and, believing the Great Commission was also for their generation, they planned. They considered how to cooperate with God, to be "laborers together with God."

Laborers together? Why should each go his separate way? Was not their unity in the Word of God? Why not seek ways of working together, a *partnership in the Gospel*?

And so it came to pass on January 23, 1912 the name Congo Inland Mission was chosen at the time of incorporation of the new fledgling Mission Board.

The more than seventy years since have seen many more meetings and questions, changes and challenges, times of prayer and lives of trust. Step by step, seeking to follow the Lord of Harvest, it has been a walk of faith, a journey of joy in spite of difficulties, a pilgrimage of peace in the face of turmoil and a living out of love in the name of the One who loved us and gave Himself for us.

### AIMM'S AREA OF MINISTRY IN THE KASAI REGION



## WALKING BY FAITH . . .



Clockwise from left:  
Rev. Laurence R. Haigh,  
Mrs. Rose Boehning Haigh;  
The "Lapsley", a river steamer named  
for pioneer Presbyterian missionary to  
Congo; Rev. Alvin J. Stevenson;  
First buildings at Djoko Punda mission  
station, 1912.

SEVERAL CONTRASTING PERSONALITIES were brought together by a loving sovereign God in the early years of the Twentieth Century. The influence of a British Mission Director, a Black American Southern Presbyterian pioneer, a young couple from Moody Bible Institute ready to go to the field, a Canadian Baptist who had served with the Christian and Missionary Alliance team, and an energetic young woman full of ideas and visions, from a Lutheran family in Chicago, all blended with two groups of heartland Mennonite farmers and church leaders to give birth to what we call today the *Africa Inter-Mennonite Mission*.

Dr. Guinness of the Congo Balolo Mission, the Regions Beyond Missionary Society, came from England to meet with delegates of the two Mennonite groups in February 1911. Dr. William Sheppard, a Black American who pioneered work east of the Kasai River for the Southern Presbyterians, met with the newly formed Mission Board May 1, 1912, telling of the vast West Kasai basin still untouched by the Gospel.

The young couple from Moody, Rev. and Mrs. L. B. Haigh, sent by the Central Conference of Mennonites to East Africa but now returned were ready for the new pioneering venture.

The Rev. Alvin Stevenson had already served with the C&MA mission at the mouth of the Congo River but now as a member of the Salem Evangelical Mennonite Church (EMC, but then called the Defenseless Mennonites) of Gridley, Illinois, was available to follow the Haighs to the new field.

And Miss Alma Doering was vigorously advocating the launching of a new work in unreached areas, introducing key persons, including Dr. Sheppard, to the Mennonite groups, and anxiously awaiting the permission to recruit workers from both North America and Europe for the new organization she envisioned.

The two Mennonite groups convening for these first steps of faith were both of Amish background, both born of revival movements and both having eagerness to be obedient to the Great Commission and the necessity of evangelism in North America as well as abroad. Could they possibly have dreamt of the road that our Lord would open to them and those who followed when they took the first steps of faith? That road of joyful obedient service and sharing is still leading us on seven decades later.

By 1913 the first two stations of the new Congo Inland Mission were sited, Djoko Punda (Charlesville) in the north and Kalamba in the south both along the Kasai River.

The second band of workers arrived early in 1913. Miss Sara Kroeker, an Evangelical Mennonite Brethren (EMB) nurse from Jansen, Nebraska, Rev. and Mrs. Aaron Janzen, from the Mennonite Brethren (MB) Church in Mountain Lake, Minnesota and Walter Scott Herr of the Evangelical Mennonite Church (EMC) arrived January 24.

But February 16, 1913 also demonstrated the sacrifice that often accompanies obedience. Alvin J. Stevenson had contracted tuberculosis and after several weeks of serious illness died in his grass hut at Charlesville. His wife Matilda and their three children were waiting in Illinois until after the initial explorations were completed. Their reunion on this earth was not to be.

In his farewell message at Gridley, Illinois, Rev. Alvin Stevenson had said, "Nearly every mission that's founded in Africa requires the sacrifice of a life laid down. If I should be called upon to be that sacrifice I would not call it dying in vain, if we can but blaze the trail for others to follow, and bring the knowledge of Christ to those in heathen darkness."

## THE TEEN YEARS

One year later his grave at Djoko Punda was a blaze marking a trail reaching into the darkness, but not in vain. Other graves followed. The infant child of Rev. and Mrs. Aaron Janzen died just two months later. The Janzen's four-year-old son also died on the field in 1919. Walking by faith led through dark valleys.

But the darkness could not overpower the light and by 1914 sixty-eight were attending school at Djoko Punda. In January 1915 the first two converts to the Gospel of Grace were baptized, Kalala and Luaba Isaac, who later became a leading pastor.

The first church was organized with twelve members (ten came from the neighboring mission at Luebo). Between the two stations nearly three hundred were attending Sunday School with 270 at Sunday services. Within two and one-half years of the start of work three additional outposts were established with native teachers and more than 1,600 received medical treatment. Compassion was coupled with proclamation and instruction from the beginning.



From top:  
Djoko Punda buildings, 1915;  
Graves of Alvin Stevenson  
and Janzen infant, Djoko  
Punda, 1920 photo;  
Miss Agnes Sprunger's pas-  
port photo, 1916.



## WALKING IN THE DARK . . .



Early missionaries, ca. 1914

"I am a member of two clans, my clan from birth here in the Kasai, and the clan of Jesus. When I joined the clan of Jesus, there were some things that I left behind forever!"

—Sh'a Pulu, Zaire Pastor  
Oldest living CMZ Pastor



Darkness enveloped the world during these years as "the Great War" (World War I) engulfed Europe halting much travel to Africa. Of the first seventeen CIM missionaries, eight were from England, Scotland, Holland and Sweden recruited by Alma Doering. Five others from Europe were accepted but were never sent because of the war. Miss Doering herself was stranded in Europe until 1919.

In 1916 when the Haighs returned to the Belgian Congo from their first furlough they were accompanied by three new workers who became the first really long-term workers, Rev. and Mrs. J. P. Barkman from the EMC and Miss Agnes Sprunger of the Missionary Church Association. The ministry of these three covered seventy-three years of service between them with Miss Sprunger finally retiring in 1953.

The first three women converts were among the group of twelve baptized in 1917. The same year a new training school was begun and an appeal was made to the Board to open a new station among the neighboring Bapende tribe.

By the end of the war the Congo Inland Mission Church had grown to sixty members, but the missionary team had dwindled to five on the field. Some were on furlough, some remained at home and others transferred to other fields of service. But the journey of faith continued in what we now know as south central Zaire.



Frank Enns, Chief Kisanga, and church leader, Kitamba David, early days at Nyanga

## THE TWENTIES



Rural school, 1930's

## WALKING IN THE MISTS . . .

When we went to Mukedi in 1923 we found a people who knew nothing of Christmas, the anniversary of our Lord and Saviour's birth. We did not know their tongue nor their customs. On Christmas day we, with the teacher-evangelist, went to one of the villages for a meeting. Miss Agnes Sprunger had translated a few songs at Nyanga, and we sang . . . Then we closed our eyes to pray, and when we opened our eyes, our audience had vanished out of sight. They thought we would give them sleeping sickness by closing our eyes.

—Erma Birky, Missionary

**B**Y THE TIME THE CONGO INLAND MISSION was ten years old the work in the Congo was firmly established. A third mission station was formally opened in 1921 at Nyanga following several years of laying a foundation. In May of 1923 the fourth station Mukedi was established also among the Bapende. The church had grown to two hundred members.

While the work in Africa seemed to be moving ahead on a brightening path, the personnel picture was in a state of change. The pioneers, Laurence and Rose Haigh, left the field after their second term in 1920. The Janzens left in 1921 shifting to a neighboring area to the west. (After World War II they served with the Mennonite Brethren mission team.) Seventeen new missionaries arrived in 1923 including the woman instrumental in arousing interest in missions in many communities, Miss Alma Doering.

Miss Doering was an aggressive recruiter and fund raiser. In her contacts she discovered several churches in the Grand Rapids, Michigan area that were interested in sending missionaries but who did not have a board of their own. Eight of these were among the group that arrived in Congo in 1923. But the three-year experiment with this "Michigan Auxiliary" was not entirely satisfactory. Some envisioned a large inter-denominational mission work growing out of CIM while the Board was re-affirming its desire to continue as an inter-Mennonite partnership.

In 1926 Alma Doering resigned from the Congo Inland Mission to found the independent non-denominational Unevangelized Tribes Mission which established work in areas to the west of the CIM field.

Significant for the work was the first visit of an Executive Secretary to the African field in 1928. The Rev. A. M. Eash spent ten months visiting a variety of missions in the Congo, attending a conference of the Congo Protestant Council in Leopoldville and observing the ministries of all CIM missionaries and their stations. Rev. Eash returned to the United States in 1929 with a new enthusiasm and fresh ideas that were soon adopted by the Board.



Above: Rev. A. M. Eash, traveling in Nyanga area, 1928; Alma Doering in "Push-push", Erma Birky in "Kipoi" and Agnes Sprunger, ca. 1923. Below: Baptism of first Bapende converts, by Aaron Janzen, ca. 1921; Building Djoko Punda church, 1920.



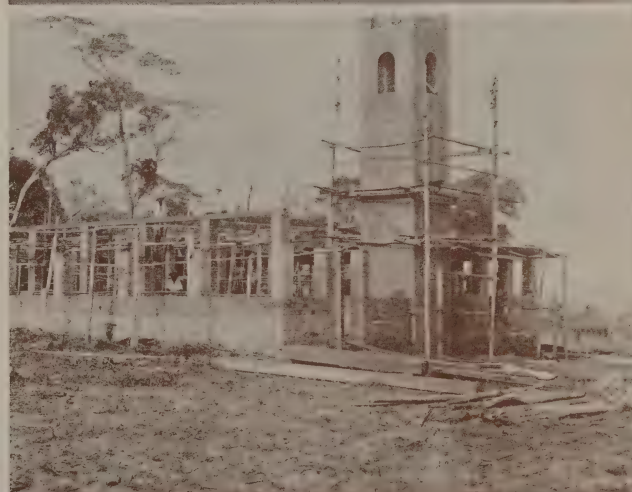
By 1929 the Mission saw a need for a periodical of its own and the *Congo Missionary Messenger* was born with Rev. Eash as editor. It continues as the *AIMM Messenger* today. In its early years it included a German language section written by an EMB pastor in Chicago, G. P. Shultz.

The first organization of a Women's Auxiliary for the Mission took place in 1929, and the first Model "A" Ford arrived in Congo donated by Minnie Breneman, of Normal, Illinois, a member of the Boynton Mennonite Church.

During the Twenties mission salaries were raised, reaching \$450 per year by 1929! Three Hundred Fifty Dollars was considered one-way passage to the Congo and \$150 was given to buy extra clothes and food for a five-year term.

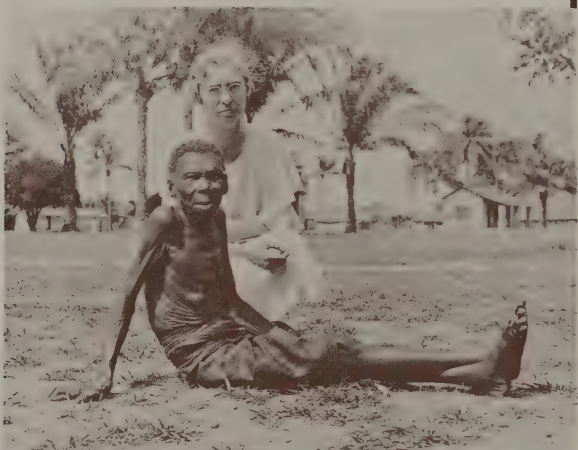
At the close of the decade twenty missionaries were serving on four stations. Automobiles enabled easier travel. A brick building seating six hundred had been erected as early as 1921 at Djoko Punda. Housing was becoming permanent and the church, too, solidly planted. Eight hundred members constituted the CIM church and nearly 6,700 children were enrolled in schools.

It was during this decade that several long-term missionaries began their work including Erma Birky, Kornelia Unrau and Mr. and Mrs. Frank Enns all of whom served into the 1960's. They and their colleagues, both national and expatriate, walked on in faith. But before the pathway became brighter deep shadows tested their courage.





## THE THIRTIES



From top: Construction of chapel; First brick church, Charlesville; Erma Birky and Skululsa, 1939.

**T**HE SHADOW OVER MUCH of the world in the Thirties was the economic depression. And mission agencies were not exempt. But shadows are seen only as a contrast to light. For the Congo Inland Mission the brightness was the fires of revival and the courageous dedicated lives of both nationals and missionaries reflecting their Saviour's love.

Six national leaders were ordained in 1930 including Pastor Kazadi Matthew who is still active 52 years later! Six more nationals were ordained in 1934.

Revival movements were reported in several districts with reports from missionaries of baptisms of up to 200 or more at a given service, even when baptism was administered only after careful instruction and examination. Church membership rolls swelled. Several chiefs were genuinely converted and the first graduates of the Bible schools among the Bapende tribe marked progress.

The plea for a resident doctor was finally realized when Dr. Rudolph Unruh arrived in 1931 and hospital care could be offered in addition to local clinics.

The first Gipende language New Testament translation was completed by Agnes Sprunger and published in 1935. Miss Sprunger, who first went to the Belgian Congo in 1916 was a member of yet another denomination that originated within the Mennonite family of churches, the Missionary Church Association. From 1930 through 1934 the MCA had a representative on the CIM Board.

These provided brightness to the pilgrimage of faith. But the shadows were prominent, too.

Financial pressures at first limited expansion, then slowed program development and finally required curtailment of the work. While twenty-three missionaries were approved by the Board during the Thirties only seventeen were sent. Tragically, six could not go because of the severe shortage of funds at the height of the Great Depression. One of these was willing to pay her own passage but could not obtain sufficient support to remain on the field. Others were sent through great sacrifice of supporting persons.

A sun stroke limited the activity of Dr. Unruh and prevented his return after furlough leaving a gap in the medical work that would continue into the Forties. Dr. Unruh asked the Board for an additional five doctors and at least that many nurses to properly man the various mission centers. Only one couple was sent and then only after several delays.

## WALKING IN THE SHADOWS . . .

A new station, Holesa, southwest of Kalamba had to be abandoned by missionaries, Rev. and Mrs. Sutton, because of religious and political pressures from government authorities though nationals were able to continue some of the work in an indigenous fashion.

But God was at work. In the Mukedi area a mass movement took place in 1939 in which 2,000 turned to the Lord from their traditional beliefs and fetish practices. A permanent structure was built for the Nyanga Church with funds made possible by the sale of the South Washington Mennonite Church in Illinois when that congregation merged with the Calvary Mennonite Church of the same city.

Seven of the seventeen missionaries that went to Africa during the Thirties are still living as AIMM enters its eighth decade. They are Archie Graber, Russell and Helen Schnell, Fanny Schmallenberger, Anna Quiring, Mabel Sauder and Aganetha Friesen Enns. Their shared terms of service cover 209 years including furloughs.



"With every steamer there are scores of young men of every rank and nationality, coming to the Congo, willing to leave the comforts of home, willing to endure hardships, willing to face dangers and loneliness for the sake of business, for the sake of a name, for fame. But where are those who will go for Jesus' sake and the Gospel? Shall we allow the zeal of the men of the world to excel our zeal for Christ and the Gospel?"

—A.D. Graber, 1930  
Missionary

Left: Nyanga church choir, Mrs. F.J. Enns at pump organ.



The African church grew from 800 to nearly 5,000 members in the decade. Representation on the CIM Board also increased when the Evangelical Mennonite Brethren appointed the Rev. G. P. Shultz as a member. Support from EMB churches had been given as early as 1912 to Sara Kroeker (Anderson) and later to the Frank Enns family and Kornelia Unruh.

Two hundred forty acres were cultivated at the four stations to provide an adequate food supply. Limited quantities of livestock were kept as initial attempts at agricultural development were tried. However the concept of Agricultural Missions didn't come into its own until the late Fifties.

World War II in Europe began affecting the Belgian Congo already in 1939 casting a new shadow over the road the church and mission would have to walk.

## AFRICA

Words by R. L. Hartzler  
Adapted from "Argentine" by J. W. Shank

Spanish Melody

1. Far o'er the o - cean Lies a land of o - pen door; Long is the  
2. Great land of sun - shine, Land of stream and roll - ing plain; Land long neg -  
3. Far o - ver you - der In the land of won - drous fame, Mil - lions are

jour - ney To that dis - tant shore; And with in its bor - ders Count - less souls in  
lect - ed, Land of won - drous fame; 'Tis so long you've waited For the Gos - pel  
dy - ing, Lost in sin and shame; Let us haste to save them, Let us give and

dark - ness sleep, Know - ing not our Sav - ior, Or His love so deep,  
we can bring; Are your chil - dren dy - ing, Know - ing not their King?  
let us pray; For the Lord has called us, We must help to - day.

CHORUS

Af - ri - ca, dark Af - ri - ca, We have heard our Mas - ter's call;

Fear not, oh, de - spair not; Je - sus died for all.

Song written by Board member, R.L. Hartzler, 1929



Moving to Mutena from Kalamba, 1948

## THE FORTIES



Village at Mutena

**H** EAT CAN COME from the fires of world wars or the toil of harvest beneath a bright sky. Walking uphill is hot work and laboring under pressure or with limited tools for a task can make one warm. So it was with the ongoing of the Mission. All of these combined to make the Forties both exhilarating and exhausting.

The decade began with more nationals being appointed to responsible positions, including the stations' church councils. Kazadi Matthew and Kamba James were ordained as "assistant pastors," the highest rank permitted by the colonial authorities who were not especially receptive to Protestant church growth.

The Roy Yoders and Fanny Schmallenberger were diverted to Portugal when their ship was captured by the German navy. They were able to reach their field by way of South Africa.

After their first ship, the Zam Zam, was torpedoed in 1940, Dr. Merle and Dorothy Schwartz finally arrived in Africa in 1942. It had been six years since the field had a resident doctor. In fact the Congo Inland Mission had a doctor in Africa for only five of its first thirty years. Ten years were to pass before the next physician Dr. Elvina Martens joined the medical work. Obviously the nurses valiantly filled many gaps.

Furlough travel to the United States during the war years was not possible, so most of the workers due for leave spent six months in South Africa little dreaming that the Mission under a new name would someday expand its ministries to that part of the world. Lake Madimape was also developed at this time for a place to rest.

Negotiations in 1943 led to the affiliation of the General Conference Board of Missions with CIM. A. E. Kreider was the first General Conference representative on the Board in 1944.

Lois Slagle was the first new missionary to go the field during the war years, leaving in April 1945. She had to travel by Army Air Force Transport Command, having received a priority as a Registered Nurse. All her personal papers including her Bible, Testament and address book had to be checked and sealed by the U.S. Censor's office. While waiting for a week at the embarkation point in Miami for an available seat Miss Slagle was required to attend briefings as to what to do if the plane should be forced down over jungle area or at sea. In case of finding oneself in a jungle area without food they were told to "watch the monkeys and eat what the monkey eats and then if food gets too scarce eat the monkey." The trip was made without incident.

## WALKING IN THE HEAT . . .



Twenty-six new missionaries went to Africa during the Forties and all served at least ten years or longer. Three are currently in Zaire having returned for special assignments following their retirement, the Glenn Rocke's and Anna V. Leichty. One couple continues in an active role in the home office, James and Genevieve Bertsche.

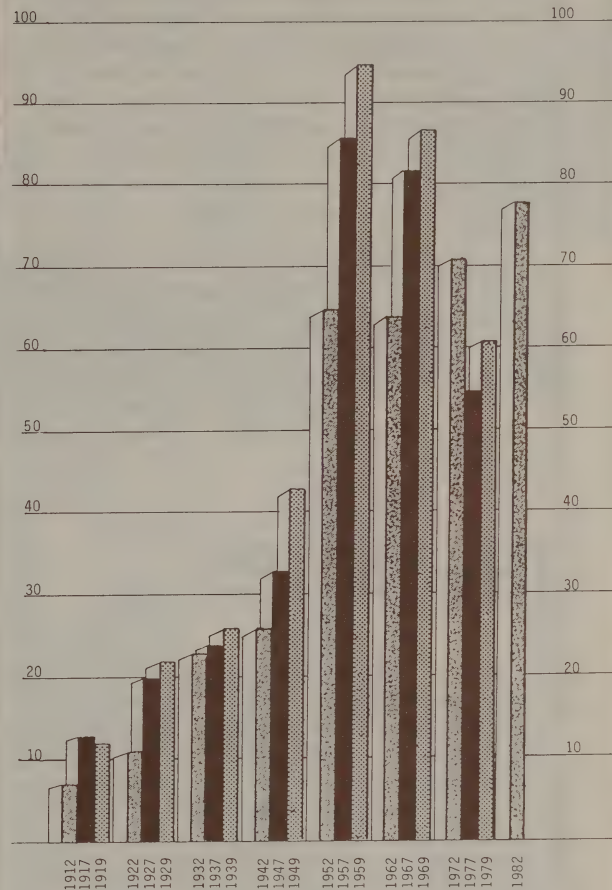
The Executive Secretary, the Rev. C. E. Rediger, traveled to the Congo spending four months visiting the work in 1946.

Some of the "heat" of the Forties could be attributed to opening the first new stations in more than twenty years. By 1946 the Kalamba station was recognized as not being ideally situated for the developing work. A new site was selected ten miles from Kalamba along the road to the diamond mining center at Tshikapa. Mutena, dedicated April 1948, became the new name among the CIM stations.

While new buildings at Mutena were being constructed, explorations began to locate an additional station at the rapidly growing diamond town of Tshikapa itself. In spite of strong opposition from religious and political colonial powers the concession was granted in 1948 by Chief Kalonda and other authorities. Located across the Kasai River from Tshikapa proper, this new station was soon called by the name of the local village, Kalonda, though its proximity to Tshikapa made both names applicable and they were often used interchangeably.

The heat of changes brought about by the war years prompted great concern for more adequate training of national leaders and higher standards of education for the mission worker. Post-war Africa was facing challenges. Many of her young men had been abroad in the war. They were exposed to ideas and concepts, material possessions and moral corruption in the larger world that changed their perspectives. Commercial development of natural resources and raw products also increased dramatically in the post-war years with the overflow effects among traditional cultures. In the midst of these transitions qualified missionaries were needed with skills in many areas.

## Growth of the CIM/AIMM Missionary Team



**Two hundred ninety-five persons were sent to Africa by CIM/AIMM in the first seventy years.**

God, the wise master builder, never sends His children forth without proper equipment. He has placed many things at our disposal in the physical realm and, if we avail ourselves of them, they will make us more effective servants. However, in many people's estimation these supersede the spiritual equipment necessary. God never intended that any one should try to render service without first experiencing the energizing power of the Holy Ghost in their lives. The early Christians were impotent, powerless, fearful and easily discouraged before Pentecost. What a contrast to their later life. The same holy power that came into their lives and literally transformed their service can also be ours.

—Rev. H. E. Bertsche,  
Board Member, 1941

SIXTY-SIX NEW MISSIONARIES joined the CIM team during the Fifties. It was a heady time for Christian missions, a time of walking by faith in the refreshing breezes.

The African church was maturing as it continued to grow. The attempts at expanding begun at the close of the Forties finally came to be. After initial permits were granted they were also delayed as attempts to rescind them were made by local authorities in Tshikapa. It wasn't until 1950 that actual development of Kalonda and Tshikapa materialized. In the end the larger tract on the north side of the Kasai River became the main mission station while a second smaller tract within Tshikapa proper became the site of the first urban church in CIM's history. (It later became the administrative center of the Mennonite Church of Zaire.) Twenty-one Belgian officials, fourteen missionaries and 2,400 Africans attended the dedication of the new Tshikapa church building November 26, 1950. The brick chapel was designed to seat 300 comfortably. Kabangu Thomas served as the first pastor.



Primary education

## THE FIFTIES

Since the early years at Djoko Punda attempts had been made to take the Gospel to the Bashilele tribe west of the Kasai River. Evangelistic teams penetrated the territory of this previously semi-nomadic hunting tribe and several out stations were established but results were generally meager.

After World War II additional plans were made to reach this tribe in a more consistent way but it wasn't until 1950 that the first station, Banga, was established with the Russell Schnells launching the work. They moved into their new bamboo and grass housing shortly before Christmas 1950.

The beginning of this decade saw twenty-nine missionary children on the field. Those of school age attended the English school sponsored by the Southern Presbyterians. By 1953 the decision was made to cooperate with the Mennonite Brethren in a school for missionary children at Kajiji to the south.

The field conference of 1950 requested the Board to send a minimum of eighteen new workers during 1951 and '52. In actual fact twenty-three arrived on the field in those two years.

Mr. H. A. Driver became Executive Secretary in 1951 and visited the field at the end of that year and the early part of '52. He traveled part of the time with Dr. C. A. Bowman and Mr. Orie Miller of MCC. Dr. Bowman produced a 16 mm film in two parts entitled "Along African Paths," which was premiered in Washington, Illinois in 1952.

In 1951 radio transmitters were installed by Levi Keidel at Mutena, Mukedi and Nyanga with receivers at each of the six stations. This vastly improved inter-station communications with great savings in time and anxieties. Prior to this new technology communication over an area the size of the state of Illinois was limited to deliveries by foot, bicycle messengers or driving many miles to make face-to-face contact. The transmitters were old Army surplus that worked after a fashion but they certainly were an improvement over bike messengers.

In 1951 Leopoldville was described as a large overgrown frontier town of 200,000 Africans and 10,000 expatriates. Thirty years later the city's name was Kinshasa and it had a population of three million!

The Fortieth Anniversary of CIM was observed December 15, 1952 at the last session of the Field Conference meeting at Djoko Punda. Several Africans who had been with the Haighs and other pioneer missionaries were present to take part in a drama reenacting those first days. Tape recorded messages from Rev. L. B. Haigh and several others were played to the assembled group.

## WALKING IN THE BREEZE . . .

At the conclusion of forty years of work the African church membership was 11,586 with six active stations. The mission family had grown to sixty-five adults including those on furlough.

By this time negotiations were under way for the merging of a former Unevangelized Tribes Mission (UTM) station, Kamayala, with the Congo Inland Mission. This was finalized in 1953 as the founding missionary sisters, Bertha and Mary Miller, and their co-worker Victor Buck joined the CIM team. The Miller sisters were supported by Mennonite Brethren in Christ churches in Pennsylvania. This denomination is now called the Bible Fellowship Church.

Victor Buck was a pioneer in agricultural development and experimentation having been in Africa since 1920. He and his wife joined the Kamayala station at its founding in 1930 where he continued to serve after her death. Mr. Buck introduced numerous varieties of plants and trees to this southern part of Zaire.

Assuming responsibility for the Kamayala station added 2,000 church members, a large primary school, a leprosarium and an orphanage to CIM's ministries. More significantly it placed a church center in the midst of a Chokwe-speaking tribe, a new language group for the mission. The majority of the Chokwe (frequently spelled Tshokwe in Zaire's French usage) live in Angola.

The first class of twelve couples enrolled in the new Central Bible and Pastoral Training School at Kalonda-Tshikapa in 1953 for a three-year program. Rev. Waldo Harder headed up the missionary faculty. The school continues today as the four-year Bible Institute program with missionaries, Mary Epp and Anna V. Liechty on the faculty and a national principal, Malembe Tshingudi, giving leadership.

That same year, 1953, CIM placed the first couple, the Robert Bontragers, in a partnership ministry with LECO, a publishing effort of the Protestant missions of the Congo. On the home front the Evangelical Mennonite Conference of Canada became part of the CIM constituency as their first couple, Ben and Helen Eidse, were accepted for service at Kamayala.

Miss Agnes Sprunger retired from the field in 1953 having completed the initial translation of the entire Bible into Gipende. She had not been in North America since 1935 having given up furlough opportunities after the war to complete the translating project.

In 1955 the first voluntary service workers went to the Congo including three fellows doing their 1-W alternative service as Pax men, Fremont Regier, David Claassen and Larry Kaufman.



From top: Kamayala evangelist; Shidi Lazalo, crippled hospital evangelist on "Push-push". CIM singing group that represented Congo missions at the 1955 Brussels World's Fair;



From top left: Roadside evangelism, Mrs. Frank Enns with guitar; Kandala station, Bandundu Province

Kandala station, often spelled *Kandale* on Zaire maps, became available to CIM in 1955. With 800 church members this post had been founded by a Canadian couple, Mr. and Mrs. Near, who worked as independent missionaries. It was located nearly midway between Mukedi to the north and Kamayala to the south in Bandundu Province.

New breezes of opportunity were blowing. But winds of grief also swept the CIM family. Mid-year in 1956 while on an excursion to some out stations Paxman Larry Kaufman drowned in the Kasai River while preparing to tie up the boat for a night's camp. The shock to both African and mission community did not erase the testimony Larry had left in the Congo during his less than a year and a half of witness.

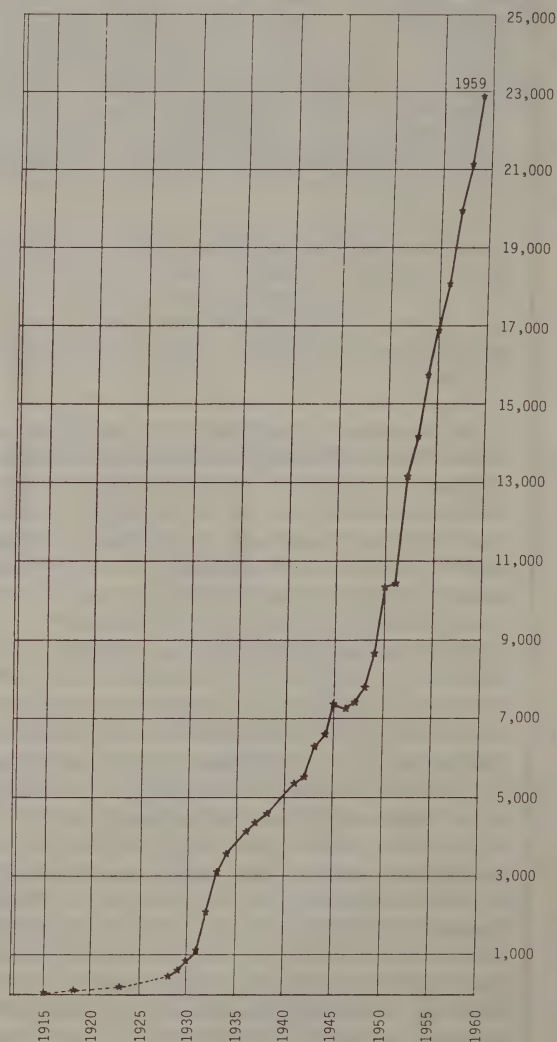
## THE FIFTIES

Additional sorrow was experienced by the Mission family October 30 of that year when Mr. Max Grütter, a missionary from Switzerland working at Kamayala, died of a heart attack. Just eight months later one of the Kamayala founders, Mary Miller, died suddenly, July 6, 1957, at the age of 59.

Other breezes were blowing, too. Winds of tribal envy and jealousies threatened to spill into the church as longtime enmities blew back and forth. These erupted by the end of the decade into strife between Lulua and Baluba peoples, both of whom were found in the CIM congregations at Charlesville (Djoko Punda), Mutena and Tshikapa.

The Breezes of the Fifties were a prelude to a new wind blowing in Africa, winds of change, winds of nationalism, that were set to dismantle the hold of colonialism. The breezes were the gathering of winds that would move obstacles to autonomy and independence!

By 1959 CIM was taking steps toward integration of mission and church. Two African representatives had been welcomed to the missionary field conference as visitors in 1955. Four were invited as delegates to the 1956 sessions. By '59 sixteen national delegates were seated, two from each station, having full and equal voting privileges with the missionaries.



Church membership growth up to time of National Independence. These are baptized adult believers of the churches established by the Congo Inland Mission (AIMM).

**I**F THERE WAS EVER the temptation for the Mission to quit the journey it could have been during the storms of the Sixties. The church had been planted. Tools and training had been provided. With the risks involved would it not have been prudent to divert the pilgrimage of faith elsewhere? No, the walk of faith was willing to follow a path of suffering, as well, if necessary.

Even so, when the storm broke in July, 1960 many were taken by surprise. Less than a year earlier veteran missionaries wrote, "A Congo-wide uprising against authority does not seem likely at present. Therefore we have good prospects to be able without much interruption to continue . . ." Certainly it was clear that the national church leaders did not want the missionaries to leave as the June 30, 1960 Independence Day for the Congo approached.

An Integration Plan had been adopted in Charlesville during February 25-27, 1960. The name "the Evangelical Mennonite Church of Congo" was adopted. In its French form it was known as the *Eglise Mennonite au Congo*. It was this church that would be tested in the storms first.

Shortly before Independence one Congolese pastor while pointing out some failures and mistakes of the CIM missionaries over the years added, "But if you failed in some ways, we know that you have not failed to teach us the Word of God." The effectiveness of that teaching was soon tried.

Since the latter part of the Fifties pent up tribal feelings had gained an upper hand among the Lulua. They resented the Baluba, a tribe that had moved into traditional Lulua territory. They felt the ambitious Baluba would gain more control once Independence arrived and leadership positions opened in government.

Students in the CIM schools represented both tribes and fears for their safety by village leaders necessitated a carefully negotiated exchange to return them to home regions by January 1960. Church meetings took on dimensions of distrust.

Kabangu Tom and Baluba refugees



***"As long as it is day, we must do the work of Him who sent me. Night is coming, when no one can work."***

John 9:4

Finally the Baluba, finding themselves outnumbered, fled to ancestral territory to the east and south. Eventually 300,000 were displaced. Severe famine compounding the refugee problems developed by September and Archie Graber was called back to Africa from furlough to head the relief efforts of the program called CPRA, the Congo Protestant Relief Agency. The CPRA was launched by Orie Miller of the Mennonite Central Committee as a joint relief organization with the Congo Protestant Council. Extensive operations were eventually organized in Elizabethville (Lubumbashi) refugee camps and at Bakwanga (Mbuji Mayi) in the South Kasai.

For Baluba church leaders such as Kazadi Matthew and Kabangu Thomas identification with the suffering opened opportunities for the re-organizing of congregations in their new locations.

## THE SIXTIES

Belgian authorities, who had hardly considered Independence for the Congo a possibility in 1955, hurriedly arranged for the turnover of the territory by June 30, 1960 to national leadership with limited preparation.

Independence Day arrived calmly enough but within days reports of military mutinies in several centers were circulating. By July 5 the uprisings were affecting the rural areas of the interior and it was the missionary's turn to experience the storm.

Flag raising



**F**IVE UNFORGETTABLE DAYS in July 1960 saw the mission community totally evacuated as mutinies and general breakdown of authority necessitated their leaving, as much for the safety of remaining African nationals as for their own welfare. By July 12 all were able to find refuge at a Methodist Mission near Malange, Angola after miraculous timings and provisions made their safe passage a reality.

Most families made their way back to North America by means of the U.S. or Canadian Air Force flights provided for the expatriate evacuees. Before the end of the month, however, the Bob Bontragers had returned to Leopoldville (Kinshasa) from West Africa to resume responsibility for the Protestant publishing house, LECO. By late-August three men, Elmer Dick, Allan Wiebe and James Bertsche, left their families in North America and returned to the "up-country" CIM area. Other men were soon to follow, returning amid great uncertainty and at possible risk but going to continue their walk of faith with the African church.

By the end of the year, twenty-one CIM missionaries were back on the field.



From top: 1960 Evacuation; Arriving in Angola; Evacuees at Methodist mission, Angola

## THE SIXTIES



Increased literature sales in midst of turmoil.

Three Congolese couples came to North America in August 1961 to study at Freeman Junior College. An extensive itineration the following summer was an extra education for both the students and hosts as they shared a brother-sister relationship across cultural bounds.

Early 1962 presented the Mission with an unexpected opportunity. With the closing of the Belgian diamond mining company in Tshikapa, CIM was invited to take over the operation of the company's well-equipped 300-bed hospital and a 140-acre farm for a minimal rent. What a contrast to the opposition experienced only a decade before! A bright development before the third wave of storm.

In September 1962 Tshikapa suddenly found itself again in turmoil as the government's proposal for a new provincial capital was opposed, with threats and violence, by the area's Lulua people who felt they were being squeezed out of power. United Nations troops conducted a hasty evacuation of most women and children to Luluabourg (Kananga), took control of the city's bridges and kept rival factions on opposite sides of the Kasai River. Related tensions threatened to erupt around the Nyanga station, too.

## WALKING IN THE STORM . . .



From top: Destruction from Kwilu rebellion, Kandala; Pastor Kidinda David distributing food; Archie Graber unloading UN plane with refugee aid.



Refugees in Eastern Kasai

A fourth storm swept the western areas of the field in 1964 as young rebel gangs under the promptings of Pierre Mulele terrorized the Kwilu Province. Taking advantage of discontent and disillusionment when Independence did not bring the hoped for abundance, Mulele's bands began destroying and killing indiscriminately. After three Roman Catholic priests were brutally murdered nearby, the Mukedi station was evacuated. It was eventually looted and severely damaged.

To the south, CIM missionary lives were miraculously spared through the brave intervention of national Christians but the Kandala station was burned. From both stations missionaries were relocated to other areas of the field though the trauma of the ordeal and the suffering of many in the churches weighed heavily on the community.

One more storm of the Sixties involved CIM personnel in the northeast city of Stanleyville (Kisangani) where the Melvin Loewen family was assigned to the new Protestant University. Along with many others of the expatriate community they were held hostage for several days by rebel Simba troops who controlled the city. A dramatic rescue by Belgian paratroopers airlifted by American planes on November 24 freed the Loewens and two American Pax men, Jon Snyder and Gene Bergman, along with a large group of others. But rebel fire killed twenty hostages including missionaries Dr. Paul Carlson and Phylis Rine before the rescuers could reach them.

Midway through the decade the skies over the Congo began to clear. A central Government was once more in control and the church and mission could get on with their labors.



"I just marvel how the Lord keeps sending a legion of angels to keep pushing that Chevy truck through the mud holes. I wonder if they ever get as muddy as I do?"

—Sam Entz, AIMM Missionary

Clockwise from left: ISTK students, Kinshasa; Arnold Harder, SEDA seminar; Lois Slagle and friend, Mutena. Village seminar;



The storms had been hard experiences. Though God had graciously spared the lives of CIM missionaries, many of other missions and thousands of Christian Congolese had died during the succession of rebellions and inter-tribal wars. The church had been severely tested. Some came through the fire, and some through the flood. For others there were times of walking through great sorrow, but for all it was by faith in the blood offered by the Suffering, Loving Savior.

The great storms passed and the journey went on, no longer a walk of missionary leading the way for national but now a walk side by side in genuine partnership.

New programs were launched such as the joint pastoral training program in Kinshasa, an agricultural development program at Nyanga and a student hostel in Kinshasa. Christian Education, literature development and distribution and evangelism programs were given new impetus. Older programs were strengthened as responsibilities increasingly were shared with or turned over to national leadership. By the end of the decade 87 workers were again involved.



THE SKY BRIGHTENED by the latter years of the Sixties. The Seventh decade of the century found the Mission walking rapidly forward. New horizons were visible. New directions were indicated. The journey of faith was fruitful.

By the 1970's Africa's nations were adjusting to their new status as members of the world community. The exciting days surrounding independence settled down to the realities of economics, budgets, development, and expanding infrastructures. Following nationalism, *Africanization* became the desire.



From top: Signing documents of Fusion, 1972, Kakesa Samuel, Ngongo David, Reuben Short, Milo Nussbaum; CMZ Administrative Center, Tshikapa



General Secretary Kabangy Moise, 1974.

THE CHURCH IN ZAIRE was coping with additional responsibilities. Questions of the role of missionaries and the division of resources between an integrated mission and church led to an historic agreement of fusion, January 14, 1971. CIM ceased to exist as a *separate structure* within Zaire, though it remains very much intact as a North American sending agency. Mission property in Africa became church property and missionaries worked for the African church under responsible African leadership. It was not a matter of the Mission leaving or quitting but a sharing with the believers of Zaire both the blessings and burdens of the work for the sake of the Gospel.

Late in 1971 President Mobutu Sese Seko changed the name of the Republic of Congo to the Republic of Zaire as part of a sweeping program of *authenticity* and *Africanization*. Overnight familiar street names vanished, statues disappeared and citizens were required to replace their "European names" with African ones. Along with the rest of the world, the mission community had to quickly learn new names for places and persons. Leopoldville was no longer the name of the capital city. Now it was *Kinshasa*. Luluabourg became *Kananga* and Stanleyville was called *Kisangani*.

## THE SEVENTIES

With Congo no longer being the name for the country in which the Congo Inland Mission was working it became necessary for CIM to reconsider its own identification. At this same time thoughts of expansion into other areas of Africa were crystalizing. Exploration of needs in Southern Africa had been pursued by James Bertsche and Don Jacobs in 1970 and opportunities in Lesotho and Botswana were being weighed seriously. So in keeping with its partnership approach, as several Mennonite groups cooperating, the Congo Inland Mission adopted a new name for itself—the Africa Inter-Mennonite Mission, Inc., on June 19, 1972. AIMM became the new acronym. The Mennonite Church in Zaire now had the initials CMZ, *Communauté Mennonite au Zaire*.

The national leadership felt a strong need for a central headquarters and requested a veteran missionary to come and supervise construction in Tshikapa. August 27, 1972 the Administrative Center of the CMZ was dedicated with much rejoicing. In October 1972, across the Kasai River from the Center, the new hospital at Kalonda was dedicated amid praise and celebration with the administrator of the Tshikapa territory cutting the ribbon or, rather, one of the rolled bandages from the women of North America which was used as the ceremonial ribbon.

1973 saw two other projects come to reality at Nyanga. MCC volunteer Albert Drudge, a Canadian farmer in his mid-years, built a waterwheel-powered pump to lift water 400 feet from a stream to a central distribution tank for the Nyanga station. Many marveled at this newest technological wonder of the Kasai basin.

This same year the dream of a girls' school was realized. The Lycee Miodi offered professional training in domestic sciences along with high school curriculum. Frieda Guengerich served as the first Director, with LaVerna Dick and Jenny Bertsche completing the staff. In typical fashion classes began before buildings were complete but the student body of nine soon grew to fourteen.

The Church by this time had grown to 36,500 in the CMZ and another 2,100 in the Evangelical Mennonite Church (CEM), Pastor Kazadi's group, in the Eastern Kasai. The Mennonite Church had an expanding witness far to the west in the capital city of Kinshasa with three congregations by 1973. The urban area of Kinshasa experienced an 11% annual growth in those years with many rural Zairian Mennonites joining the migration to the cities.



## THE SEVENTIES



From top: Handwork at Lycee Miodi girl's school, Nyanga, 1974; Urban congregation, Ngaba, Kinshasa; Radio work at Studiproka, Kananga.

The witness of the church, both urban and rural, was tested when "secularization" accompanied *authenticity* as policies of the government. Religious broadcasts and periodicals were banned. Church gatherings were limited to Sunday worship services and all western-style clothes including long-sleeved shirts, suits and neckties were forbidden to be worn by Zaire citizens. It was a time of sifting true faith from outward forms as the North American churches learned that even Christmas Day was canceled as a holiday and declared a regular work and school day.

By early 1975 the Zaire government had nationalized all church schools removing religious instruction from regular school hours. It appeared the walk of the believers under clear skies might vanish under clouds of suppression. But freedom for basic witness continued and, in answer to many persons praying, restrictions were eventually lifted in the ensuing months and years. In the meantime the church was freed to concentrate on evangelism and outreach resulting in significant growth in new areas.

## WALKING IN THE CLEARING . . .

**T**WO THOUSAND MILES SOUTH of the Equator steps were taken on a new trail of faith. This time the pathway of obedience to the Great Commission led through mountains and valleys of the tiny Kingdom of Lesotho. Explorations conducted in 1970 and additional contacts in 1972 led to placing Allen and Marabeth Busenitz in Lesotho. They were to relate to the Lesotho Evangelical Church while exploring wider avenues of ministry for AIMM. Allen's gifts and earlier experience with student work under Inter-Varsity Christian Fellowship soon resulted in contacts at the university. An invitation to preach on occasion at the English language worship services in the capital city, Maseru, resulted in a door opening among the international community. This congregation, the Maseru United Church, approached AIMM asking for pastoral leadership. Bob and Joyce Gerhart were sent in October 1974 to assist the small struggling group and help it become an inter-denominational evangelical witness. Maseru United Church experienced rapid growth among both expatriate persons working in assistance and with developmental agencies, and national Basotho. The initial experiment of seconding AIMM personnel to MUC has resulted in a partnership which continues in the Eighties with Virgil and Mary Kay Gerig giving leadership. MUC is self-supporting as it expands its outreach and increases fellowship with national churches.



Maseru United Church, Maseru, Lesotho

**C**ONTACTS IN BOTSWANA with indigenous church groups developed by James Juhnke while serving with the Mennonite Central Committee led to an interest in assisting several of these African Independent Churches. It took time to cultivate relationships, overcome suspicions and arrive at mutual understandings, but by 1975 AIMM had responded to a felt need by sending veteran missionaries, Ed and Irene Weaver, to Botswana to lay the foundation for a ministry to and with several of the African churches that had no ties to the mission-established denominations.

Requests for Bible teaching and leadership training had prompted AIMM to "risk" being misunderstood both in Southern Africa by those they wanted to help and in North America by some who might question the wisdom of relating to such diverse groups with strange practices. The work has not been without its difficulties but the partnership established has been rewarding. Missionaries learned new ways of approaching meaningful worship in an African context and national believers have come to a clearer understanding of the Scriptures through studies designed for their situations.

Village at Mahalapye, Botswana



Irvin and Lydia Friesen and John and Ruth Kliever, two Mennonite Brethren couples with previous years of experience on the Mennonite Brethren field in Zaire, came to Botswana under AIMM to teach Bible among the AIC folk while in North America MB Board of Missions and Services teamed with the AIMM Board for partnership in Southern Africa.

AIMM's ministries in Botswana expanded into radio with the Norman Derstine's arrival in 1976. The Henry Unrau's continue this witness over Radio Botswana, the national radio network, along with helping various church groups with their media programming.

From top: Taking offering at Spiritual Church service, Lesotho; Fulani young man on bicycle, Orodara market, Upper Volta; Siaka in bookstore, Orodara.



## THE SEVENTIES



Meanwhile AIMM personnel in Lesotho established a relationship with Samuel and Emily Mohono and their church, also an African Independent Church, or to use the term they prefer, an African Spiritual Church. In response to their invitation Stan and Lorri Nussbaum arrived in Lesotho in 1977. Stan established the first village based Bible classes and creatively developed an extensive curriculum suitable for persons with little formal education. This Bible teaching program related to a revived association of indigenous churches, the Federal Council of African Spiritual Churches. The Lesotho name for "Feed My Sheep," *Alosa Linku Tsa Ka*, or ALTK, was adopted to identify the program.

**I**N WEST AFRICA, following MCC relief work in the Sahel region in the 70's, Mennonites were approached by the Christian and Missionary Alliance of Upper Volta. A western area of this land-locked, poverty stricken nation was without an effective evangelical witness and the C&MA team had more than enough to do in areas of their national church. At the same time AIMM was considering additional ministry in a French-speaking area of Africa (Botswana and Lesotho both being English-speaking nations) where the potential might exist for an eventual team ministry with French-speaking Africans from the Mennonite churches of Zaire. Upper Volta seemed to be that new open door and so the walk by faith took a new direction heading to Upper Volta. The first workers Loren and Donna Entz and Dennis and Jeanne Rempel arrived in 1978. Anticipating a patience-requiring long wait until the first believers would exist in this area largely influenced by Islam, the Lord was already at work preparing the life of Traoré Siaka, a young man who had just come to personal faith in Jesus Christ through the reading of a New Testament. What was designed to be agricultural development activity in the community, hoping for opportunities for sharing their faith, the new AIMM workers found themselves engaged in a strategic discipling ministry. Before long a small handful of believers were gathering in the market town of Orodara.

## WALKING IN THE SUNLIGHT . . .

But language barriers of several distinct tribal groups of this area brought to light the need for linguistic work and Bible translation. While the need was being realized in Upper Volta, God was already leading several individuals in North America along the road of obedient faith so that by the time the new decade of the Eighties had arrived the first linguists for Upper Volta were being trained.

In less than Seventy years, the work of AIMM had gone full circle from pioneering efforts among the Hidden Peoples of the Kasai Basin in Zaire, to a new work among the Hidden Peoples of Upper Volta in a new phase of Frontier Missions. The technical tools available were vastly different but the same Great Commission motivated the newest "generation" of the AIMM team as they sought to share the Good News of the love of God in Christ Jesus in word and deed.

**B**ACK IN ZAIRE, where it all began, missionaries filled supportive roles in a servanthood stance with an autonomous church. Several historic mission stations were now simply church centers without mission personnel. By the eighth decade North American workers were living in three urban centers: Kinshasa, Kananga, and Kikwit. Of the older stations only Nyanga and Kalonda-Tshikapa had missionaries in residence. It was not a matter of abandoning the road which God had called AIMM to journey. The forty-three missionaries in Zaire at the end of 1982 were teamed with a church of nearly forty thousand baptized believers with well over a hundred ordained pastors giving leadership in three dozen districts to more than six hundred parishes. Missionaries work with a medical program that is training an increasing number of national nurses and medical technicians while also launching a comprehensive health care program. Missionary instruction supplements the teaching of nationals in church leadership training while the church operates its own schools with fifty thousand students enrolled. Missionaries share skills in agricultural development, printing, and publishing, Theological Education by Extension (TEE) and youth discipleship. And they share their faith in evangelism along with Zaire believers.

Yes, more missionaries are needed and wanted. But it will be a journey in partnership with African Christians, a journey along the same road of faith and joyful, obedient witness.

—Robert W. Gerhart



CMZ officers, 1982: Tshimowa Bisosa, Treas.; Mbonza Kikunga, Pres.; Mukanza Ilunga, V. Pres.

**T**HE YEAR 1982 rounds off the seventh decade of the existence of AIMM; seven decades of an inter-Mennonite witness on the African continent, seven decades of proclamation and ministries of compassion, seven decades of church planting, church nurture and church growth, seven decades of sharing and caring in the Name of our risen Lord.

The editor of the *AIMM Messenger* has chosen to highlight these seven chapters of ministry in this special anniversary issue by using the imagery of a pilgrimage and by describing the broad variety of historical landscapes through which AIMM and its people have needed to walk in obedience to the Lord's leading.

## THE EIGHTIES

There was the initial period of pioneering and exploration when the early AIMM trailblazers, like the Old Testament patriarch of another day, also set out on an unknown journey literally not knowing whither they went.

Every succeeding decade, since that first one, has had its own distinguishing characteristics, its own particular mix of opportunities and problems. Each ten-year period has made its own special demands upon AIMM and its messengers and has been the setting for its own combinations of achievement and failure, encouragement and heartache, response to and rejection of the invitation to "taste and see that the Lord is good."

But as each decade came to a close, a moment of reflection and inventory quickly brought into focus the unwavering faithfulness and generosity of the Lord in His dealing with us. And as there was contemplation of an untried, unknown chapter before us, just as quickly was there renewed vision and a renewed sense of call to ongoing obedience in mission.

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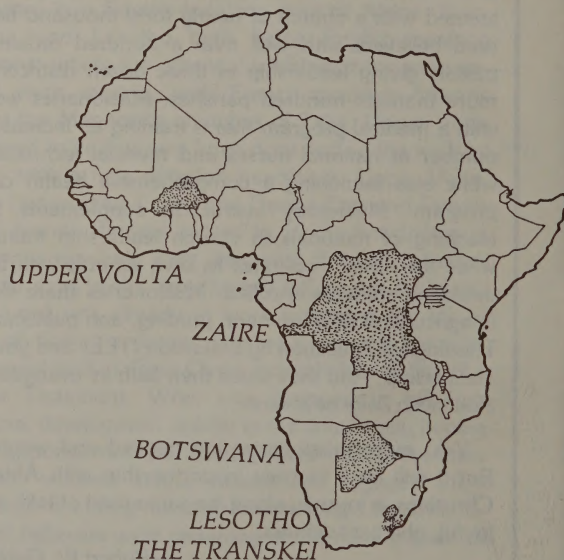
So now once again we pause to reflect on the Lord's leading, protection, provision and blessing of the past. As we do so, we can only praise Him for what He has seen fit to accomplish through simple, desperately limited human means. And, once again this year, we turn to face a new, untried, unknown chapter of ongoing witness and service on that immense, volatile continent with such staggering problems and potential.

How will some future historian one day review and characterize the eighth decade of AIMM's ministry in Africa? This we have no way of knowing. But one thing we do know, our call to service and discipleship is just as clear and compelling today as it was when AIMM first set out on its African journey. We are equally sure that just as He has led and enabled AIMM and its people in the ministries to which He has called us these past seventy years, so will He lead and enable us in the years which it pleases Him to still grant us in the future.

It is, then, with this trust and in this confidence that we, this year, mark seven decades of AIMM pilgrimage. Through His grace and by His help we intend . . . to keep on walking.

—James E. Bertsche

### *Africa Inter-Mennonite Mission*



# AND STILL WALKING . . .

AIMM MESSENGER